Notes on The Revelation

W. J. Erdman

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By

W. J. ERDMAN, D.D.

Edited by

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To
the Memory of One
Who Lived for Christ
and
Looked for His Appearing

INTRODUCTION

THE writer of these brief *Notes*, W. J. Erdman, D. D., was one of the most devout and diligent and influential of modern Bible students. For more than twenty years he served as Secretary and Leader of the Niagara Bible Conference, and thus did much toward guiding the thoughts and molding the lives of countless Christian workers who represented many denominations and served in many lands.

As a pastor he was honoured and beloved because of his saintly personality, his devotion to duty, his sunny disposition, his humility, his unfailing humour and his broad culture. His ministry was sympathetic, self-sacrificing, patient, and energetic. His preaching was Scriptural and spiritual. Because of these many qualities he was called to be the first pastor of the church which the famous evangelist, D. L. Moody, established in Chicago, and he served efficiently there as in his other fields of labour.

He was more widely known, however, as a teacher than as a pastor, and during the main portion of his ministry he was not in charge of a congregation. Due largely to his wise and sane leadership the Niagara Conference maintained its original and definite purpose as a meeting for the study and the exposition of Scripture. To this gathering can be traced the establishment of scores of Bible Conferences now being conducted annually in this country and abroad. None has ever surpassed it in the

charm of its fellowship and in the power of awakening love for the Word of God and consecration to Christian service.

The character and ability of its leader made him a welcome visitor at Northfield and Winona and similar gatherings of Christian leaders. His influence was extended not only by platform addresses, but by informal contacts with individuals, and with groups of ministers, and in conferences with young men. Whether answering questions before the large gatherings on "Round Top" at Northfield, or in conference with other students at Swamscott-by-the-Sea, or in the pavilion overlooking the lake at Niagara, Ontario, or before the Christian Association circles in the mountains of North Carolina, he was continually communicating to others his own eager desire to know the Scriptures and by this knowledge to come into ever closer relationship to Christ.

There were two lines of Bible study in which he found particular delight. One was the New Testament teaching relative to the work of the Holy Spirit, and the other was the truth concerning the personal return of Christ. Neither one was with him a matter of speculation, or mere intellectual concern. He ever studied and taught with a practical intent.

He found that the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer imparted a spirit of sonship, which brought one into close relation with God, as a child to a loving father. He found too that the great office of the Spirit was to glorify the Son. In his own experience Christ was a living, present, personal, sympathetic Saviour and Lord; and his expressed desire was to lead others not toward Christ, but to Christ. He regretted that so many professed Chris-

tians were living lives of bondage to law, imitating Christ, admiring Christ, but knowing too little of the peace and joy which result from complete surrender, and childlike trust.

With an equal interest he turned to the study of prophecy, particularly in the closing period of his life. While deeply interested in current events, he spent a large portion of his time in poring over the pages of the Apocalypse.

Even in his ninetieth year, with eye undimmed and mind alert, he was daily discovering some new beauty or some deeper significance in the cryptic sentences of Saint John. He was like that Beloved Disciple who is reputed to have lived until the closing years of the first Christian Century, and in the dark days of Roman persecution, to have caught his inspiring visions of the ultimate triumph of Christ.

So this apostle of love, like the seer on Patmos, fixed his gaze on the glorified Christ, and looked longingly for his return, and tried to see how far the puzzles of The Revelation could be solved, and in what measure its pictures and symbols pointed through the movements of history to the ultimate goal of prophecy, to the coming of Christ and the perfected Kingdom of God.

While classed with so called Pre-Millennialists, he did not feel that the Scriptures were very explicit in their millennial teaching. He found it less important to observe that Christ would return before the Millennium, than to maintain that he must reappear before the glories of his Kingdom could be complete.

For this Second Coming of Christ he insisted that no dates could be set. As it had been the Blessed Hope of the Church in all ages, he taught that it

might occur in any generation. Certain events, however, must first occur. Supreme among these was the evangelization of the world.

He was an ardent advocate of missions. He believed that the preaching of the Gospel among all nations was the divine, immediate, incomplete task of the Church, and that it was the appointed means of hastening the coming and the Kingdom of Christ.

He did not teach, however, that the whole world would be converted before the Lord returned. He regarded this present age as one of mingled good and evil. "The wheat and the tares" were to grow together "until the harvest." The triumphs of the Gospel were to become more glorious, but the oppositions of the Adversary were to become more subtle and more severe. Evil would be embodied finally in a Man of Sin, the Beast of the Apocalypse. His persecutions of the people of God formed the great focal point of The Revelation, and his destruction by the returning Christ, and the appearing of the City of God, its triumphant climax and its close.

This great Book of Prophecy, with its seals and trumpets and vials, with its marching armies and distress of nations, with its Millennial peace and its gleaming walls of The New Jerusalem, were to the author of these *Notes* a mystical vision of the coming of Christ and the related events. In brief glimpses it covered the whole course of human history from the birth of Christ to the time of his predicted return. Its great message was to his Church. It was to assure his followers in all times of sorrow and peril that in his keeping they were safe, and that a time would come when their sufferings would cease, as the Seer predicted, "they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither

shall the sun strike upon them, nor any heat: for the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall be their shepherd, and shall guide them unto fountains of waters of life: and God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes."

There are other interpretations of the Book. Some find in the Beast and Babylon a picture of Nero, or of the Worship of the Emperors; and others a description of the rise and fall of Romanism. However, whether the Beast points to imperial or papal Rome, or whether, as held by the author of the *Notes*, the Beast is a symbol of the final opposition to Christ, the following Outline and its accompanying brief comments, may lead to a better understanding of the literary structure of the Book, and may aid those who are seeking to more fully interpret its majestic imagery, and to gain courage from its inspiring optimism. Whatever its mysteries, despite the differing views as to the significance of its details, no thoughtful reader of the Apocalypse can fail to be thrilled by its confident predictions of ultimate and universal triumph, and by its picture of that time when the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ.

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FOREWORD

THESE *Notes* are not set down in a dogmatic spirit. They contain certain conclusions attained after protracted study of the Revelation, "in dry light," without any admixture of heat or cloud of controversy.

The futurist interpretation was applied to this Book, for prophetic scriptures seem unintelligible without such interpretation. All prophecy must be harmonious and mutually interpretative.

May the perusal of these Notes tend to promote the blessing promised to the readers and hearers of this Book.

W. J. E.

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THE PROLOGUE

THE PROLOGUE. Revelation 1: 1–8.

1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show unto his servants, even the things which must shortly come to pass: and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John; 2 who bare witness of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, even of all things that he saw. 3 Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of the prophecy, and keep the things that are written therein: for the time is at hand. 4 John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace, from him who is and who was and who is to come; and from the seven Spirits that are before his throne; 5 and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins by his blood; 6 and he made us to be a kingdom, to be priests unto his God and Father; to him be the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen. 7 Behold, he cometh with the clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they that pierced him; and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn over him. Even so, Amen. 8 I am the Alpha and the Omega, saith the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.

The Introduction or Prologue to the Revelation, consists of an Inscription, a Salutation, and a statement of the Theme or Subject of the Book.

The Inscription, vs. 1–3, begins with the word which has given the Book its name. "Revelation" (Greek "Apocalypse") means an "unveiling," and particularly the revealing of future events.

Of this Revelation Christ is declared to be the Author. It has been given by God the Father to his Son, that the Son may "show unto his servants things which must

shortly come to pass." This Revelation is committed by Christ through his angel to his Apostle John. It has come to John in the form of visions, and he is writing "the things that he saw."

A blessing is pronounced upon the (public) reader of the Book and upon those (present) who hear what is read, and upon those who allow the teachings to influence their lives.

The Salutation, vs. 3–6, indicates that the entire Book was to be sent to each one of the churches, and not merely the one letter addressed to that church. These churches together represent the Universal Church.

To these churches, John sends the usual apostolic greeting of "grace" and "peace," and he unites in his salutation the three Persons of the Trinity. The Father is described as "he who is and was and is to come." The Spirit is denoted by his seven-fold operations, as "The seven Spirits that are before his throne." The Son is pictured in the character in which he appears in the Book, as "The Revealer," "the Risen One," and "the Ruler of the earth." To him "glory and dominion" are ascribed as to him who has "loved us and loosed us from our sins and made us to be a kingdom, to be priests unto his God and Father."

The Theme, vs. 7, is the Coming of Christ, and the Revelation is a book of visions concerning his second advent and the events which precede and follow his glorious reappearing. The visions foretell the future of the Church both of the True and the False; of the World Power under the final head, the Beast; of the Nations of the world and of the Kingdom of God.

The establishment of this kingdom over the earth is the goal of all the movements through Seals and Trumpets and Vials. This goal is reached twice in the course of the visions, at 11: 15–16 and at 19: 6 and the context following; so in addition to the seven-fold division of the Book it may be regarded as being divided into two parts, Chapters 1 to 11 and Chapters 12 to 22.

Whatever definitions or theories of the Kingdom of God as something now existing or to be advanced upon

the earth which men may give or act upon, it is evident from these Visions of the Apocalypse that this perfected Kingdom is still future.

[Note by the Editor: As thus indicated, the author belonged to the "Futurist" school of interpreters. He regarded the Anti-Christ, or the "Beast," and the Great Tribulation, and the perfected Kingdom of God, as depicting persons or events still to appear. The "Preterist" interpreters regard Nero as the Anti-Christ, and find the pictures of the Apocalypse fulfilled largely by the Emperor-worship and the persecutions of the Church in the early Christian centuries. The "Historical" interpreters regard the Pope of Rome as the Anti-Christ, and find, in the Revelation a prediction of the rise and fall of the Papacy. The "Spiritualizers" regard the Book as containing no prophecies of coming persons or events, but symbols and illustrations of abiding spiritual and moral principles. Whatever of truth the author saw in these other schools of interpretation, he regarded the Apocalypse as mainly concerned with prophecies concerning the end of the present age and the personal return of Christ.

He belonged, however, to the more conservative and restrained group of interpreters. He saw that the inspired Seer swept the whole horizon of events from the birth of Christ to His coming again in glory. In type and symbol he found indications of revolutions and convulsions, but of the continuous and ultimate triumph of the cause of God upon earth, until "the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ."]

I. The Seven Churches

Introductory Vision

CHRIST AMONG THE CHURCHES. Ch. 1: 9–20.

9 I John, your brother and partaker with you in the tribulation and kingdom and patience which are in Jesus, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. 10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet 11 saying, What thou seest, write in a book and send it to the seven churches: unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamum, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. 12 And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And having turned I saw seven golden candlesticks; 13 and in the midst of the candlesticks one like unto a son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about at the breasts with a golden girdle. 14 And his head and his hair were white as white wool, white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; 15 and his feet like unto burnished brass, as if it had been refined in a furnace; and his voice as the voice of many waters. 16 And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. 17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as one dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying, Fear not; I am the first and the last, 18 and the Living one; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades. 19 Write therefore the things which thou sawest, and the things which are, and the things which shall come to pass hereafter; 20 the mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks are seven churches.

The candlestick, more accurately the "lamp stand," was a familiar Old Testament Symbol for the People of God. The sacred oil which was supplied to the lamps typified the Holy Spirit, through whose operation God's people became the light of the world.

Here Christ is pictured as standing among "the seven golden candlesticks," or lamp stands, which are designed to represent the Universal Church of Christ. He holds in his hand seven stars; and John explains: "The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches and the seven candlesticks are seven churches."

The Lord Jesus is seen among the Churches as the Son of Man, in a priestly and yet searching judicial attitude, meting out praise, and uttering warning and promise, and holding out to the overcomers various blessings and especially conjoint sovereignty and rule with him and on his own throne. 3: 21.

He is the Living One, the First and the Last; and in relation to his Church and in confirmation of his word that the gates of Hades should not prevail against it, he is heard saying, "I have the keys of Hades and of Death." And he has now, and until the Kingdom comes, a peculiar priestly relation to "the Church which is his body." 1: 17–18; Heb. 1: 13; Eph. 1: 22.

The question has been raised as to whether verse 19 suggests a threefold or a twofold division of the book. Probably the latter is the case. The Vision and the Seven Letters together constitute "the things that are," and "the things which shall be hereafter" refer to the visions beginning with chapter 4.

In this connection it is interesting to note the use in the Revelation of the phrase "And I saw." This phrase is used not only for the introduction of a vision, but it suggests a principle of interpretation; it is a formal word leading to new matter, like the Old Testament phrase "And the Lord spake unto Moses."

It indicates when prefatory to even only one brief vision that its subject is of great import demanding a pause of due contemplation.

But especially remarkable is the fact that when only

one "And I saw" covers an extended range of objects, it indicates that all such objects are in a unitous relation to each other either as to time or theme or both.

For instance, one such formal phrase introduces the vision of the Son of Man and the Seven Churches, and there is no repetition of it throughout the entire section concerning them. 1: 9–3: 22.

This fact suggests that what things John saw and was commanded to write in a book and send to the churches should not be separated into three but only into two parts, "Write therefore, the things which thou sawest; both what things are, and what things are about to come to pass hereafter." The same conclusion is reached by comparing the two commands to write. 1: 2, 19; 1: 11; 22: 7, 9, 16, 18; 1: 19.

The first "And I saw" accordingly belongs to the things of the period of the churches timeless and present, and then the second begins the series of visions to follow. 1: 12; 4: 1.

THE LETTERS TO THE CHURCHES. Chs. 2: 1–3: 22.

The fact that the whole Book is given to the Seven Churches, indicates that they represent the Universal Church in its various phases during the present age. There were seven Christian churches in the cities of Asia which John names. They embodied the characteristics which are described and to them the living Christ sends a message appropriate to each. They may also represent in general the course and character of the historic church in certain phases from the days of the apostles until the coming of Christ. The messages addressed to them are pertinent to all churches in similar conditions now; they are also full of encouragement and warning to individual members of any and every church.

The letters are written in accordance with a careful and exact literary scheme. The structure of each letter is as follows: (a) An inscription, in the words "To the angel of the Church" in the city named. (b) A description of the Author of the letter given in language

borrowed from the Introductory Vision of Christ in the midst of the Churches. (c) The message of praise or censure. (d) The words of encouragement or warning. (e) The promise "to him that overcometh."

The group of seven letters is subdivided into a division of three and four. Among other distinctions, in the first three, the promise to the "overcomers" is introduced by the phrase "He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." In the last four, this phrase follows the promise. In every case the promise is specially pertinent to the form of temptation indicated in the letter.

1. TO THE CHURCH IN EPHESUS. Rev. 2: 1–7.

1 To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, he that walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks: 2 I know thy works, and thy toil and patience, and that thou canst not bear evil men, and didst try them that call themselves apostles, and they are not, and didst find them false; 3 and thou hast patience and didst bear for my name's sake, and hast not grown weary. 4 But I have this against thee, that thou didst leave thy first love. 5 Remember therefore whence thou art fallen, and repent and do the first works; or else I come to thee, and will move thy candlestick out of its place, except thou repent. 6 But this thou hast, that thou hatest the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. 7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches. To him that overcometh, to him will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.

The "angel" or "messenger" to which the letter is addressed, is commonly understood to mean the "minister" or "pastor" of the church. Some suppose the word indicates a literal "angel," and some "the characteristic spirit" of the particular church. The message is surely intended for the church, whatever may be meant by the representative "angel."

Ephesus was a city of great wealth and beauty and culture. It was called "The Light of Asia." It was celebrated for its temple of Diana, one of the "nine wonders of the world," and was a great commercial and political and religious centre. Furthermore it was of great importance in the history of the Christian Church. Here Paul laboured for three years, and here John carried on and finished the work of his declining years. It is not unnatural that John sent the first message to the church in the largest city, and to the church nearest his own heart.

The description of the author, "he that holdeth the seven stars," etc., links the letter at once with the vision of "Christ in the midst of the churches" (ch. 1), and indicates the presence of Christ and his power to control.

The church is praised for its toil and patience, and its hatred of evil men. It is blamed for losing its "first love" for Christ. It is called to repent lest its "candlestick" be moved out of its place.

To him who overcomes the temptation to lose spiritual fervour is promised the privilege of eating of "the tree of life," that is of life in its fulness, of sharing in a Paradise regained.

2. TO THE CHURCH IN SMYRNA. Ch. 2: 8–11.

8 And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: These things saith the first and the last, who was dead, and lived again: 9 I know thy tribulation, and thy poverty (but thou art rich), and the blasphemy of them that say they are Jews, and they are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. 10 Fear not the things which thou art about to suffer: behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life. 11 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches. He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

It is natural that this city should have been next in

mind, for it stood next to Ephesus in position and importance. The city was known as "The Beauty of Asia." Even in modern days the city has been known for its great importance, and has likewise been associated with suffering, for "the Church in Smyrna" was the suffering church.

Whoever "the angel of the Church in Smyrna" may have been, none can forget that, possibly at this time, Polycarp, the famous Christian martyr, was the head of this church. In any case the name of Polycarp helps one to remember the church of Smyrna, and to understand this letter of encouragement, which has ever brought cheer to those who were persecuted and tormented for the sake of Christ.

The description of the author is significant, "The first and the last, who was dead, and lived again." The Christ who tasted the bitterness of death, and rose in triumph, can comfort those who suffer for his sake.

He assures them that he knows all their tribulation and poverty, and the blasphemy of their enemies. He encourages them to be brave even in the face of greater trials: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

The overcomers are promised exemption, not from the death of the body, but from the death of the soul. One who is loyal to Christ never knows real death, "the second death."

3. TO THE CHURCH IN PERGAMUM. Ch. 2: 12–17.

12 And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: These things saith he that hath the sharp two-edged sword: 13 I know where thou dwellest, even where Satan's throne is; and thou holdest fast my name, and didst not deny my faith, even in the days of Antipas my witness, my faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwelleth. 14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there some that hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to

commit fornication. 15 So hast thou also some that hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans in like manner. 16 Repent therefore; or else I come to thee quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of my mouth. 17 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches. To him that overcometh, to him will I give of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and upon the stone a new name written, which no one knoweth but he that receiveth it.

Like Ephesus and Smyrna in beauty and wealth, it was more exclusively a religious centre. It was a perfect Pantheon of pagan deities. Paganism and impurity are almost synonymous. Pergamum is well described as the place " where Satan's throne is."

However, even in Pergamum, a Christian church can be established. It is not easy, however, to be a Christian there. The followers of Christ need encouragement. They are reminded that their Lord can and will punish sin. " It is he that hath the sharp two-edged sword."

He sees the faithfulness of his followers, who like the unknown hero Antipas, are willing to lay down their lives for his Name.

He sees, however, others in the church. They are like Balaam. They make loud protestations of loyalty to God, but their influence is corrupting. They would lead men into idolatry and impurity.

To them comes a call to repentance, lest they suffer the judgment of the Lord. To those who withstand all these solicitations to evil, to the " overcomers," is the promise of fuller communion with Christ and of more perfect knowledge of God. They will be admitted to his Holy Place, will eat " the hidden manna " like the priests in the tabernacle; like them too who saw the jewels on the breast-plate of the High Priest, they will receive, each one, " a white stone, and on the stone a new name written."

4. TO THE CHURCH IN THYATIRA. Ch. 2: 18–29.

18 And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like a flame of fire, and his feet are like unto burnished brass: 19 I know thy works, and thy love and faith and ministry and patience, and that thy last works are more than the first. 20 But I have this against thee, that thou sufferest the woman Jezebel, who calleth herself a prophetess; and she teacheth and seduceth my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols. 21 And I gave her time that she should repent; and she willeth not to repent of her fornication. 22 Behold, I cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of her works. 23 And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he that searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto each one of you according to your works. 24 But to you I say, to the rest that are in Thyatira, as many as have not this teaching, who know not the deep things of Satan, as they are wont to say; I cast upon you none other burden. 25 Nevertheless that which ye have, hold fast till I come. 26 And he that overcometh, and he that keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give authority over the nations: 27 and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are broken to shivers; as I also have received of my Father: 28 and I will give him the morning star. 29 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.

The author describes himself as the "Son of God" who has power to discern and to punish sin, "who hath his eyes like a flame of fire and his feet like unto burnished brass."

The church is praised not only for its love and faith and service and patience, but for its increase in these virtues. The church is rebuked, however, for its voluntary submission to evil influences. A woman, a professed prophetess, a veritable Jezebel, was allowed to remain in its fellowship, while teaching that Christians were free to practice immorality and idolatry.

Then follows the call to repentance. Punishment, long graciously withheld, is sure to fall, both upon this corrupt teacher and her followers. The fault has been in a false charity, which allowed such doctrines to continue in the church unrebuked.

However, the whole church was not corrupt. To those who had not been misled comes a message of gracious encouragement and promise. They had not accepted the false teachings, had not fathomed the depths of the Satanic mysteries. Upon them "no other burden" was to be placed than continued opposition to these evil influences. They must, however, hold fast the truth and purity which they have, until Christ returns.

To the overcomer is promised a share in the victorious reign of Christ. They are even promised Christ himself; his virtues, his holiness, his brightness are to be imparted to them: "I will give him the morning star."

5. TO THE CHURCH IN SARDIS. Ch. 3: 1–6.

1 And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars: I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and thou art dead. 2 Be thou watchful, and establish the things that remain, which were ready to die: for I have found no works of thine perfected before my God. 3 Remember therefore how thou hast received and didst hear; and keep it, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. 4 But thou hast a few names in Sardis that did not defile their garments: and they shall walk with me in white; for they are worthy. 5 He that overcometh shall thus be arrayed in white garments; and I will in no wise blot his name out of the book of life, and I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. 6 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.

Sardis, the capital of ancient Lydia, was as well known

for its wickedness as for its wealth. It lay a short distance southwest of Thyatira.

In addressing the church in this city, the Author describes himself as "He that hath the seven Spirits of God," that is, the Christ, the Anointed one who was filled with the Spirit, upon whom rested the Spirit, "without measure." He also held "the seven stars," the "angels" of the seven churches, for all ministers are the "gifts" of the risen and ascended Lord.

In spite of its reputed life and activity, the church is rebuked for its spiritual deadness. It is exhorted to be watchful in its present position and peril, and to strengthen the things that remain; for the coming of Christ may be near, and Christians should be ready for his return.

Some in Sardis had not defiled their garments with sin. They had walked in white robes, by the grace of God; they would yet walk in the white robes of glory. Their names would be in the Book of Life; they would be confessed before the Father and his angels.

6. TO THE CHURCH IN PHILADELPHIA. Ch. 3: 7–13.

7 And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth and none shall shut, and that shutteth and none openeth: 8 I know thy works (behold, I have set before thee a door opened, which none can shut), that thou hast a little power, and didst keep my word, and didst not deny my name. 9 Behold, I give of the synagogue of Satan, of them that say they are Jews, and they are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. 10 Because thou didst keep the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of trial, that hour which is to come upon the whole world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. 11 I come quickly: hold fast that which thou hast, that no one take thy crown. 12 He that overcometh, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go out thence no more: and I will

write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God, and mine own new name. 13 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.

Philadelphia is the church of privilege, the church of the "open door." The message of this letter is an encouragement to faithful use of opportunities, in order to secure eternal satisfaction and freedom from regret.

The church was not large in numbers. The city suffered greatly from earthquakes. However, this was the last of the churches of Asia to survive.

The Author describes himself as "Holy"; none other could. He is "true," none other fulfills every ideal, none other embodies reality. He "hath the key of David," he only can unlock the gates of the Kingdom of heaven.

So those who are holy and true and belong to Christ will find open before them opportunities for patience, for sympathy and for service.

They must hold fast the word of Christ, they must be true to the name of Christ; then they will be kept in every hour of testing and trial, and no man will be able to deprive them of their crown.

Their influence will abide, in years to come or in the life eternal. They will be pillars in God's temple, citizens of the New Jerusalem, possessors of a deep and deepening knowledge of Christ.

7. TO THE CHURCH IN LAODICEA. Ch. 3: 14–22.

14 And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God: 15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. 16 So because thou art lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spew thee out of my mouth. 17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and have gotten riches, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art the wretched one and miserable and poor and blind and naked; 18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold refined by fire, that

thou mayest become rich; and white garments, that thou mayest clothe thyself, and that the shame of thy nakedness be not made manifest; and eyesalve to anoint thine eyes, that thou mayest see. 19 As many as I love, I reprove and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. 20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. 21 He that overcometh, I will give to him to sit down with me in my throne, as I also overcame, and sat down with my Father in his throne. 22 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.

The letter to the Laodiceans gives us the picture of an apostate church. Christ has been excluded. "Lukewarm" describes a body of professed Christians who lack spiritual life and yet are unconscious of the fact that they are spiritually dead. The cause for this lukewarmness is their self-satisfaction. They have "need of nothing." In reality, they are "wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked." They are counselled to secure those spiritual necessities which Christ alone can supply.

The call to repentance is followed by the blessed invitation, "Behold I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him and he with me." No matter how dead and cold and lifeless a church may be, Christ is willing to enter into the most intimate and blessed relationship with any individual believer who admits him into the life and heart. Nor is this fellowship for the present alone. To the overcomer belongs the blessed promise "I will give to him to sit down with me in my throne." To the church in the most desperate condition is this most tender and beautiful of all promises. The rebuke administered has been most severe; the encouragement is most full of heavenly hope.

II. The Seven Seals

Introductory Vision

CHRIST IN THE PLACE OF POWER. Chs. 4: 1 to 5: 14.

1 After these things I saw, and behold, a door opened in heaven, and the first voice that I heard, a voice as of a trumpet speaking with me, one saying, Come up hither, and I will show thee the things which must come to pass hereafter. 2 Straightway I was in the Spirit: and behold, there was a throne set in heaven, and one sitting upon the throne; 3 and he that sat was to look upon like a jasper stone and a sardius: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, like an emerald to look upon. 4 And round about the throne were four and twenty thrones: and upon the thrones I saw four and twenty elders sitting, arrayed in white garments; and on their heads crowns of gold. 5 And out of the throne proceed lightnings and voices and thunders. And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God; 6 and before the throne, as it were a sea of glass like unto crystal; and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, four living creatures full of eyes before and behind. 7 And the first creature was like a lion, and the second creature like a calf, and the third creature had a face as of a man, and the fourth creature was like a flying eagle. 8 And the four living creatures, having each one of them six wings, are full of eyes round about and within: and they have no rest day and night, saying,

> **Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come.**

9 And when the living creatures shall give glory and honour and thanks to him that sitteth on the throne, to him that liveth for ever and ever, 10 the four and twenty elders shall fall down before him that sitteth on the throne. and shall worship him that liveth for

ever and ever, and shall cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

> 11 Worthy art thou, our Lord and our God,
> to receive the glory and the honour and the
> power: for thou didst create all things, and
> because of thy will they were, and were
> created.

1 And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the back, close sealed with seven seals. 2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a great voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? 3 And no one in the heaven, or on the earth, or under the earth, was able to open the book, or to look thereon. 4 And I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open the book, or to look thereon: 5 and one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not; behold, the Lion that is of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath overcome to open the book and the seven seals thereof. 6 And I saw in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, having seven horns, and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth. 7 And he came, and he taketh it out of the right hand of him that sat on the throne. 8 And when he had taken the book, the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having each one a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. 9 And they sing a new song, saying,

> Worthy art thou to take the book, and to
> open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain,
> and didst purchase unto God with thy blood
> men of every tribe, and tongue, and people,
> and nation, 10 and madest them to be unto
> our God a kingdom and priests; and they
> reign upon the earth.

11 And I saw, and I heard a voice of many angels round about the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; 12 saying with a great voice,

> Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain to
> receive the power, and riches, and wisdom,

and might, and honour, and glory, and blessing.
13 And every created thing which is in the heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and on the sea, and all things that are in them, heard I saying,
Unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb, be the blessing, and the honour, and the glory, and the domination, for ever and ever.
14 And the four living creatures said, Amen. And the elders fell down and worshipped.

As the Letters to the Seven Churches were preceded by a Vision of Christ in the midst of the Candlesticks, so in this second division of the Book, the opening of the Seven Seals is introduced by a Vision of Christ in the Place of Universal Power. To Christ is entrusted the title deed of the world. He has been given all authority in heaven and on earth. In spite of all the disorders and distress of the world, the unfolding events of human history are in his hands. Thus this Vision reveals him as the "Lamb that was slain" receiving with the Creator all worship and praise from all created beings, and from the representatives of the innumerable company of the redeemed.

It is a picture of the investiture of the Son of Man with supreme power. The worship depicted may be described as the Music of Heaven. Two great oratorios are here. There is, in the fourth chapter the Oratorio of the Creation; in the fifth chapter is the Oratorio of the Redemption. The vision of Christ in the place of universal power and worshipped by all creation, intimates the supreme triumph towards which all the events and judgments of the opening Seals move and tend. The Lamb that was slain is yet to be King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and he controls the movements of history which lead to this great consummation.

The vision does not represent the Church as in heaven before the opening of the seals begins. Rather it has been recorded to encourage the suffering church on earth,

in all times of trial, by the vision of Christ's supreme and universal triumph.

According to the principle of interpretation mentioned, "And I saw" occurs four times in the scenes of the Investiture, and each time as introductory to something which is to be viewed by itself.

1. The first opens the Vision of the Throne and Thrones, the Elders and the Living Creatures, and their worship of the holy Jehovah the Almighty Author of all *Creation.* 4: 1–11.

2. The second introduces in most brief and solemn statement *the sealed Book* to which all the subsequent Visions are related. 5: 1.

3. The third prefaces the great scene of the taking of the Book by the Lamb once slain, and the new song of *Redemption* sung by the Living Creatures and the Elders. 5: 2–10.

4. The fourth brings in the great Investiture when myriads of angels and all creatures in responsive song ascribe blessing and glory and everlasting *Dominion* to God and the Lamb, the whole concluding with the solemn "Amen" of the Living Beings. 5: 11–14.

It is affirmed by certain writers that either the Living Creatures or the Elders or both in different relations are the Church already in glory before the Seals are opened. There are, however, reasons to the contrary.

In the introductory Vision the most prominent characteristic of each is that while both worship, the Living Creatures are associated with the Throne in judgments on the guilty nations, and the Elders are associated with the Throne in worship *after* the wrath has been poured out. The Angels evidently under the supremacy of the Living Creatures are the special executors of the wrath, and also the agents of the deliverance of the saints from the Wrath. The Church certainly cannot be the Living Creatures nor the *agent* of its *own deliverance.*

The Living Creatures show, in their relations to the Four Seals, that they dominate and direct for Christ the course of the world. They summon the horsemen of the

four Seals and one of them gives the seven Bowls of wrath to the seven Angels. 15: 7.

In the scene of the Seventh Trumpet the Living Creatures do not appear, for there the Lord is viewed as having come in wrath, and they are with the Throne and the Cloud in the execution of the judgments, but in the final rejoicings they are again beheld and for the last time, for there the proleptic announcement of his Kingdom and the Marriage Supper views the time of wrath as past, and they conclude all with a final solemn Amen. 11: 16–18; Ezek. 1: 1–28; 19: 4–8.

In brief, the Living Creatures in cherubic forms are seen not only as having a prëeminence in judicial and governmental functions, but, also, as setting forth the ideal contrasts, in reverence and righteousness with the "beasts" of the world power. "When the living creatures (zoa) appear, the beasts (theria) disappear."

In the great and complete Vision of Ezekiel they are both bearers and attendants of the Throne of judgment; in the Vision of Isaiah as the Seraphim they are seen in the aspect of worship; in the Vision of John all these relations and aspects appear united. They evidently represent in the highest, holiest, fullest form of creaturehood, governmental wisdom, executive power and holiest worship. With deepest insight and consciousness of the holiness of God and of the lowliness of the creature, and of the glory of God as the chief end of creation and of redemption and universal rule, they lead elders and angels and all creatures in the worship of him that sitteth on the throne and of the Lamb that was slain. They worship, they stand and wait, they serve. They begin the worship and their Amen closes it. 5: 14; 19: 4.

In a word, these Living Ones existed, and as not fallen or needing redemption, ages before the Church began.

On the other hand, as to the Elders and their identification with the Church, a few adverse observations can be made.

1. It is clear from the teaching in the epistles to the

Thessalonians that at the time our Lord comes to raise the dead and change the living he is on his way to the earth, and the saints are caught up to meet him in the air. He descends from heaven, he is on his way to destroy the "man of sin" and his adherents, but first rescues the saints from the wrath to come. In brief, there is not a hint that our Lord returns with the saints to heaven to be with him before he opens the Seals. Such alleged Advent and return to heaven before the wrath is poured out plainly contradicts the opening Visions of the Apocalypse, but all is made consistent and harmonious with the preparatory scenes of the Vision of the Throne and the sealed Book by the great announcement that the Lord God is yet to come and to execute judgment upon the ungodly.

Resurrection is inseparable from the Coming, but the two events are not conjoined until the sounding of the Seventh Trumpet; and that certainly is sometime after the first vision. It is significant that at the time of his sounding of this Trumpet the words "who is to come" are omitted from the holy ascription heard in the first Vision. 4: 8. The Parousia is viewed as having taken place at the Seventh Trumpet for the resurrection and deliverance of the saints, and for the subsequent destruction of the wicked. 11: 15–18.

2. Much stress in favour of the theory considered has been laid on the words "us" and "we" in the song the Elders sing when the Lamb has taken the Book, but the word "us" is omitted by many authorities; and also by writers who teach the saints will be in heaven before any trumpet is blown. Besides, in such song the Living Creatures have part, but as already noted it cannot be of their redemption they sing, for they are sinless beings who never fell. And again, the Elders discriminate themselves from the redeemed in that they are seen bearing "golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints;" they rejoice, too, that such redeemed men are to be a "kingdom of priests" and to reign over the earth. 5: 9–10.

3. In a kindred theory the apostle himself, the Seer, is made to represent the Church as taken up into heaven before the Seals are opened, but John is seen in later Visions on earth again. Besides, John and the Elder in the Vision of those who come out of the great Tribulation cannot both be the Church; and the Elder is in heaven before John is called up. Ch. 7.

4. Neither can the 144,000, called "the first fruits unto God and unto the Lamb," be one with the Elders, for they are seen singing "before the Living Creatures and the Elders." 14: 1–5.

5. "The Elders and the Living Creatures" are to be distinguished also from "the great multitude in heaven" in the two final Hallels which have in view the throne and the Kingdom. 19: 1–8. In all the Visions the Elders and not the Creatures are seated on thrones around the Throne of God. They are like honoured courtiers of a prince, and not his servitors; they adore, they pray, they give thanks, they behold and rejoice in his glory. "And his glory shall be before his ancients" (elders). Is. 24: 21–23.

In brief, both the Living Creatures and the Elders existed before the Church. They as heads and leaders of the universal intimate worship may picture what the Church as the Body of Christ in the place and dignity of the first born among the Sons of God, will be, when the Lord Jesus is made manifest as the Head in whom are summed up all things in the heaven and upon the earth. Doubtless in vision David was shown these "patterns" of the twenty-four courses of priests he was told to institute and as "patterns" of persons existing in heaven long before these Visions of John. I Chr. 24: 1–9; 28: 19.

But in no wise do the Elders furnish proof that the Church was removed from earth before the Lord descended from heaven "with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God," making the destruction of the Beast and the false Prophet the final objective point.

Progression

THE SIX SEALS. Ch. 6: 1–17.

1 And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures saying as with a voice of thunder, Come. 2 And I saw, and behold, a white horse, and he that sat thereon had a bow; and there was given unto him a crown: and he came forth conquering, and to conquer. 3 And when he opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, Come. 4 And another horse came forth, a red horse: and to him that sat thereon it was given to take peace from the earth, and that they should slay one another: and there was given unto him a great sword. 5 And when he opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature saying, Come. And I saw, and behold, a black horse; and he that sat thereon had a balance in his hand. 6 And I heard as it were a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, A measure of wheat for a shilling, and three measures of barley for a shilling; and the oil and the wine hurt thou not. 7 And when he opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, Come. 8 And I saw, and behold, a pale horse: and he that sat upon him, his name was Death; and Hades followed with him. And there was given unto them authority over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with famine, and with death, and by the wild beasts of the earth. 9 And when he opened the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of them that had been slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: 10 and they cried with a great voice, saying, How long, O Master, the holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? 11 And there was given them to each one a white robe; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little time, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, who should be killed even as they were, should have fulfilled their course. 12 And I saw when he opened the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the whole

moon became as blood; 13 and the stars of the heaven fell unto the earth, as a fig casteth her unripe figs when she is shaken of a great wind. 14 And the heaven was removed as a scroll when it is rolled up; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. 15 And the kings of the earth, and the princes, and the chief captains, and the rich, and the strong, and every bondman and freeman, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains; 16 and they say to the mountains and to the rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: 17 for the great day of their wrath is come; and who is able to stand?

The visions which follow the opening of the seven seals depict the various events which precede the Appearing of Christ and by which he will prepare for the establishment of his glorious kingdom. His people are warned that such judgments will visit the earth in the present age and will be ended only by his return.

The white horse of the first Seal pictures Peace, which is taken away by War which follows under the second Seal. The third is a vision of Famine, the fourth of Death under four of its most fearful and familiar forms. The Vision under the fifth Seal is that of Martyrdom, the sixth gives a vision of those "Signs," whether physical or political, which immediately precede the appearing of Christ.

Some interpreters identify Christ, or his cause, with the White Horse of the first Seal. But the preceding verse pictures Christ as enthroned in heaven and opening in succession each of the Seals, which unfold visions of events transpiring upon earth.

As previously observed when one "and I saw" introduces a very brief statement of an object, person, or act, it intimates something worthy of greatest and exclusive attention and consideration. This is the case of the Vision wherein the Lamb is seen opening the first Seal. Vs. 1.

This supreme act, as well as the formal phrase limit-

ing its application to that act, should utterly exclude the thought that Christ is the rider of the white horse in the next Vision. Vs. 2. To open the Seals is to be entrusted with the judgment and governance of the world; he is the Sender, not one of the Sent. 6: 1–2.

Moreover, the first rider and horse are brought to view by an " and I saw " distinct from that which introduced the Opener of all the Seals, and it is made to apply also to the two horses, the white and the red together, whereas for the other two horses the phrase is used separately. This is most suggestive; it implies that the white and the red thus viewed in one vision are related to each other as peace and war, for if the red, as it does, represents a time of war and bloodshed, so the white is the emblem of a wide extended victorious peace. And this fact utterly excludes the thought that the rider on the white horse is Christ. All this is in accord with the self interpreting symbolic horses and colours in the visions of an earlier prophet. Zechariah 6: 3–4.

He beheld red and black horses precede white; that is, when the judgments of " the Lord of all the earth " had done their work " in the north country " then peace followed there, and his " spirit was quieted " there. Zech. 1: 7–11; 6: 1–8.

John, on the other hand, saw a white horse followed by a red; that is, a far reaching peace is " taken from the earth " by a great war; to the rider upon the red horse " was given a great sword."

It is evident from the Visions of these two seers that the horses and chariots of the one, and the horses and riders of the other in their forthcomings and ongoings symbolize divine providences and judicial dispensations which affect the nations for weal or woe. The order of the first four events is that of human history in every age. The colour is the symbol of the character of the dispensation. And they are all under the ordering of the Lord Jesus to fulfill the purpose of God concerning his people and his kingdom. In view of all this, the Opener of these Seals should never be confounded with the rider

on the white horse, that is, with a mere agency or instrument or dispensation of the divine will.

The rider upon a white horse in a later vision of the Wine press of Harmegedon is expressly said to be the Lord Christ, "the Word of God," "King of kings and Lord of lords," and is seen issuing forth not as one of earth, like these four horses and riders, but out of the opened heaven, and even then is not seen as the Prince of Peace, but rather as the smiter of the guilty nations. 19: 11–16; Ps. 2: 1–10.

As already intimated, each of the last two horses (famine and pestilence), is introduced by an "And I saw;" likewise the Fifth Seal (the Martyr Seal), and the Sixth Seal (the Sign Time); but no "And I saw" introduces the Seventh Seal (the Consummation Time), for its contents were not then to be seen, these being *not* the Trumpets which immediately follow, but the Seven Vials, the Seven last plagues, subsequent to these Trumpets. The "silence in heaven" during this Seventh Seal is *not* premonitory to the Trumpets but is fulfilled at the seventh trump and the Seven Vials, just as in the Old Testament predictions of great national crises of Israel an ominous silence precedes the *final* judgments of Jehovah, and such the Seven Vials are. 8: 1; Hab. 2: 20; Zeph. 1: 7; Zech. 2: 13.

Also the first four Seals are preparatory, and cannot be contemporary with and parallel to the Trumpets: because the first four Seals affect the "*fourth* part of the earth," the four Trumpets the "*third* part" of the earth, and also a third part of the sea, rivers and luminaries, while the inflictions of the Vials are *total* and *final*. 6: 8; 8: 7–12; 10: 2–8.

None of these can be parallel. In the nature of the case, the seven Vials which form the "third woe," or seventh Trumpet, cannot be assigned to the time of the first and second Woes, the fifth and sixth Trumpets; each Woe has its own time. 9: 12; 11: 14.

The Episode or Interlude

THE SEALED AND THE SAVED. Ch. 7: 1–17.

1 After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that no wind should blow on the earth, or on the sea, or upon any tree. 2 And I saw another angel ascend from the sunrising, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a great voice to the four angels to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, 3 saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we shall have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads. 4 And I heard the number of them that were sealed, a hundred and forty and four thousand, sealed out of every tribe of the children of Israel: 5 Of the tribe of Judah were sealed twelve thousand; Of the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand; Of the tribe of Gad twelve thousand; 6 Of the tribe of Asher twelve thousand; Of the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand; Of the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand; 7 Of the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand; Of the tribe of Levi twelve thousand; Of the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand; 8 Of the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand; Of the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand; Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand. 9 After these things I saw, and behold, a great multitude, which no man could number, out of every nation and of all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, arrayed in white robes, and palms in their hands; 10 and they cry with a great voice, saying,

> **Salvation unto our God who sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb.**

11 And all the angels were standing round about the throne, and about the elders and the four living creatures; and they fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, 12 saying,

> **Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.**

13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me,

These that are arrayed in the white robes, who are they, and whence came they? 14 And I say unto him, My lord, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they that come out of the great tribulation, and they washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. 15 Therefore are they before the throne of God; and they serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall spread his tabernacle over them. 16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun strike upon them, nor any heat: 17 for the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall be their shepherd, and shall guide them unto fountains of waters of life: and God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes.

In each one of the central sections of the Book, the dramatic movement is interrupted by the introduction of an Episode or Interlude. This is evidently so in the case of the Seals, Trumpets and Vials. These interludes are usually designed to comfort the people of God by the assurance that however terrible their tribulation may be, or however severe the judgments of God upon his enemies, his people, whether on earth or in heaven, are safe in his keeping and his care.

Thus here, between the sixth and seventh Seals comes an Episode concerning the "sealed" of Israel and the "saved" out of all nations. Both companies are thus shown to have been rescued from the wrath of the "day of the Lord" which was heralded by the signs of the sixth Seal which "immediately" follow the great Tribulation of the fifth Seal. Matt. 24: 29.

These Episodes in the apocalyptic Visions are both retrospective and prospective. In this one, the Tribulation mentioned goes back in time to the fifth Seal and to its second part, to the predicted complement of martyrs. It also, as to the order of Visions, anticipates the fifth Trumpet, for in it the "sealed" are expressly mentioned, and the Tribulation comes under the fifth and sixth Trumpets. There is often in these Visions a recur-

rence to the great Tribulation for it is the central and most momentous theme of the Book.

It should also be noted that as the "sealing" of the 144,000 takes place before the plagues of the four Trumpets, they survive both them and the "two woes" where the "sealed" appear. 9: 4.

An objection to the view that the Church will be in the "Great Tribulation" is found by some in that John does not know who the innumerable multitude are. 7: 13–14.

It may be enough to say that Daniel speaks of "saints" who were of his own people in the same strange and distant manner.

In all apocalyptic Visions the Seer beholds all scenes and agents as altogether objective to himself and as requiring explanation. John is no exception to this rule when "in the Spirit." Unless the contrary can be proved, it is a fair inference from many facts that by the "saints" seen as future by Daniel and by John are meant "the Church" which consists of Jews and Gentiles. The apostle Peter in his reference to the prophets and the sufferings of saints evidently views the latter as of Israel both of Daniel's day and of his own. Daniel beheld Jewish saints in the "great Tribulation," and Peter echoing Daniel's language speaks of a salvation in a "*last* season" of saints of the Dispersion who are in manifold trials. I Pet. 1: 5.

The saints represented here by the 144,000 who are "sealed," as well as the Great Multitude who stand before the throne, have been on earth during the Great Tribulation but they have been delivered from the "vials" which represent the final judgments of God upon the earth.

Some have conjectured that the Great Multitude and the Servants of God who are "sealed" both represent the blessedness and safety of the Church on earth during times of persecution. It is probably better to suppose that the second Vision of this Episode represents the saints in glory. They "have come out of The Great

Tribulation and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." "They shall hunger no more neither thirst any more . . . and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

Consummation

THE SEVENTH SEAL. Ch. 8: 1.

1 And when he opened the seventh seal, there followed a silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.

The opening of the seventh Seal is followed by "silence in heaven about the space of half an hour." "One half" indicates an interruption in the course of events. The contents of the seventh Seal are not revealed. There is a pause. The Trumpets which sound call attention to events which are to occur before the seventh Seal is opened. The literary method of the Revelation is that of climactic review.

The opening of the seventh Seal brings us to the very end and goal of all the dramatic movement, namely the coming of Christ; but just before Christ appears, there is a pause. The writer goes back to dwell more in detail upon the events which belong to the earlier Seals, at least to the fifth and sixth. Therefore the events of five Seals precede the Seven Trumpets; those of the last two Seals are parallel with those of the Trumpets, and together reach the very end of the age.

III. The Seven Trumpets

Introductory Vision

THE ANGEL AND THE INCENSE. Ch. 8: 2–5.

2 And I saw the seven angels that stand before God; and there were given unto them seven trumpets. 3 And another angel came and stood over the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should add it unto the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. 4 And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand. 5 And the angel taketh the censer; and he filled it with the fire of the altar, and cast it upon the earth: and there followed thunders, and voices, and lightnings, and an earthquake.

This vision depicts the prayers of the saints, as they are crying out to God to vindicate his cause. The answer to their prayers is found in the judgments depicted at the sounding of the seven Trumpets. The vision is an encouragement to the people of God to pray continually for deliverance from evil and from evils. It is to assure them of the ultimate overthrow of wrong and the triumph of right.

Progression

THE SIX TRUMPETS. Chs. 8: 6–9: 21.

6 And the seven angels that had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound. 7 And the first sounded, and there followed hail and fire, mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth; and the third part of the earth was burnt up, and the third part of the trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up. 8 And the second angel sounded,

and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood; 9 and there died the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, even they that had life; and the third part of the ships was destroyed. 10 And the third angel sounded, and there fell from heaven a great star, burning as a torch, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of the waters; 11 and the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter. 12 And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; that the third part of them should be darkened, and the day should not shine for the third part of it, and the night in like manner. 13 And I saw, and I heard an eagle, flying in mid heaven, saying with a great voice, Woe, woe, woe, for them that dwell on the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, who are yet to sound.

1 And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star from heaven fallen unto the earth: and there was given to him the key of the pit of the abyss. 2 And he opened the pit of the abyss; and there went up a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. 3 And out of the smoke came forth locusts upon the earth; and power was given them, as the scorpions of the earth have power. 4 And it was said unto them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree, but only such men as have not the seal of God on their foreheads. 5 And it was given them that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when it striketh a man. 6 And in those days men shall seek death, and shall in no wise find it; and they shall desire to die, and death fleeth from them. 7 And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared for war; and upon their heads as it were crowns like unto gold, and their faces were as men's faces. 8 And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the

teeth of lions. 9 And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots, of many horses rushing to war. 10 And they have tails like unto scorpions, and stings; and in their tails is their power to hurt men five months. 11 They have over them as king the angel of the abyss: his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in the Greek tongue he hath the name Apollyon. 12 The first Woe is past: behold, there come yet two Woes hereafter. 13 And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the horns of the golden altar which is before God, 14 one saying to the sixth angel that had the trumpet, Loose the four angels that are bound at the great river Euphrates. 15 And the four angels were loosed, that had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, that they should kill the third part of men. 16 And the number of the armies of the horsemen was twice ten thousand times ten thousand: I heard the number of them. 17 And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates as of fire and of hyacinth and of brimstone: and the heads of the horses are as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths proceedeth fire and smoke and brimstone. 18 By these three plagues was the third part of men killed, by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone, which proceeded out of their mouths. 19 For the power of the horses is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails are like unto serpents, and have heads; and with them they hurt. 20 And the rest of mankind, who were not killed with these plagues, repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and the idols of gold, and of silver, and of brass, and of stone, and of wood; which can neither see, nor hear, nor walk: 21 and they repented not of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

As to the plagues which are depicted in connection with the sounding of the first four Trumpets the following interpretation is suggested. The first may signify the destruction of what was identified with the common people who are, in the figurative language of psalmist and

prophet "grass," "trees," "earth." The second may correspond to the great Empire of the "beast," a mountain in the "sea" of nations; the "beast" as the predicted "little horn" controlling the "ten horns" which before he appeared were "kingdoms" created by and for the people, seeing it is said of them later when all are upholding apostate "Babylon the Great," "they receive authority" as kings, with the beast their imperial head, "for one hour." The third trumpet suggests that the "great star" fallen from heaven is the "false prophet" who, poisoning the "waters" with antichristian doctrine, upholds the blasphemous claims of the "little horn."

The fourth trumpet would then signify the dense apostasy and obscuration of heavenly "lights"; men are now judicially blinded to believe "the lie." II Th. 2: 11–12.

In regard to the fifth Trumpet there is suggested an intimate association between the Beast and the Dragon, in that all have to do with the Abyss or the particular compartment peculiar to them; for the "star" is the angel of the Abyss, and the Beast which kills the Two Witnesses comes up out of the Abyss. 9: 1; 11: 7; 20: 1–3.

In regard to the latter, or sixth Trumpet, it is plainly said that the once fettered four angels, supernatural beings themselves, kill the third part of men; and that in spite of all the plagues, "The rest of mankind repented not of the works of their hands that they should not *worship demons*."

As to the great Tribulation, the fifth Trumpet is sounded at its beginning, the Beast has his own way through its "times," and the Devil gives his authority to the Beast to make war with the saints. And as Satan is "the prince of the demons," the unnatural locusts of the fifth Trumpet may symbolize the demons who unseen are permitted to inflict plagues on men who "have not the seal of God on their foreheads."

All this suggests, since angels are representative beings,

and the unseen agents good or evil, behind human rulers good or evil, that "the man of sin," "the lawless one," who is called "the beast out of the abyss," has for his support "the star fallen from heaven" "the angel of the abyss." The one is human, the other angelic, but what the one does the other does. "The world rulers of this darkness" control the Neros, the Cæsars, the "Beasts" of flesh and blood, but both are under Satan, of whom it is said in a later Vision, "his tail draweth the third part of the stars of heaven and did cast them to the earth." II Th. 2: 1–10; Eph. 6: 11–12; 2: 2; 12: 4; Dan. 10: 13.

On the other hand, in such symbolic phrase and identifying names like Abaddon or Apollyon, this "star fallen from heaven to earth," may be the Devil himself who for a time holds the key of the Abyss until a mightier than he takes it and casts him into the Abyss for the Thousand Years. 20: 1.

These two Trumpets belong to the period of the Tribulation, after the conflict with Michael and his angels, when the devil and his angels are cast out from heaven into the earth and instigate the "beasts" and their adherents to persecute the saints. The demonic powers of the Abyss are then at work for "the time, times and half a time."

Episode

THE ANGEL WITH THE LITTLE BOOK; THE TWO WITNESSES. Chs. 10: 1–11: 14.

1 And I saw another strong angel coming down out of heaven, arrayed with a cloud; and the rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire; 2 and he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left upon the earth; 3 and he cried with a great voice, as a lion roareth: and when he cried, the seven thunders uttered their voices. 4 And when the seven thunders uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying,

Seal up the things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not. 5 And the angel that I saw standing upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his right hand to heaven, 6 and sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created the heaven and the things that are therein, and the earth and the things that are therein, and the sea and the things that are therein, that there shall be delay no longer: 7 but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, then is finished the mystery of God, according to the good tidings which he declared to his servants the prophets. 8 And the voice which I heard from heaven, I heard it again speaking with me, and saying, Go, take the book which is open in the hand of the angel that standeth upon the sea and upon the earth. 9 And I went unto the angel, saying unto him that he should give me the little book. And he saith unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but in thy mouth it shall be sweet as honey. 10 And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and when I had eaten it, my belly was made bitter. 11 And they say unto me, Thou must prophesy again over many peoples and nations and tongues and kings.

1 And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and one said, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. 2 And the court which is without the temple leave without, and measure it not; for it hath been given unto the nations: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months. 3 And I will give unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. 4 These are the two olive trees and the two candlesticks, standing before the Lord of the earth. 5 And if any man desireth to hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth and devoureth their enemies; and if any man shall desire to hurt them, in this manner must he be killed. 6 These have the power to shut the heaven, that it rain not during the days of their prophecy: and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to smite the earth with every plague, as often as they shall desire. 7 And when they shall have finished their testimony,

the beast that cometh up out of the abyss shall make war with them, and overcome them, and kill them. 8 And their dead bodies lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. 9 And from among the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations do men look upon their dead bodies three days and a half, and suffer not their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb. 10 And they that dwell on the earth rejoice over them, and make merry; and they shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwell on the earth. 11 And after the three days and a half the breath of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them that beheld them. 12 And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they went up into heaven in the cloud; and their enemies beheld them. 13 And in that hour there was a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell; and there were killed in the earthquake seven thousand persons: and the rest were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven. 14 The second Woe is past: behold, the third Woe cometh quickly.

The progress of the events which follow the opening of the six Trumpets is here interrupted, as between the sixth and seventh Seals, by two visions, one of the Little Book (Ch. 10), and the other of the Two Witnesses (Ch. 11: 1–13).

Like the previous Episode of chapter seven, these parenthetic visions are intended to comfort the people of God. They speak of their great and final suffering but also of their deliverance. The vision of the cloud-clad, iris-crowned Angel descending from heaven with the little "opened" book in his hand is but the repetition of the Vision of Daniel centuries before (Dan. 12: 5–7). (See also Ezekiel 2: 9–3: 14.) The book or roll "sealed" by Daniel is given "opened" to John. This is very significant. Where Daniel ends John begins. It was to be sealed "until the time of the end," until the "time times and a half" foretold to Daniel. It indicates

that the events pictured by these visions belong to the period of the Great Tribulation under the Beast.

The measuring of the Temple (as Zech. 2: 1, 2; Ezek. 40: 2–5) expresses the thought of preservation. In the midst of great persecution, "Israel," or the true people of God, would be secure (Ch. 11: 1–2). So too the two witnesses, representing the people of God, finally ascend up to heaven, even though first suffering death at the hands of the Beast. The mission of these Two Witnesses like that of all prophets sent to Israel in days of apostasy is to call the people to repent and to turn to Jehovah their God. Thus the faithful are encouraged by this Episode to testify even unto death, being assured of a better resurrection.

While these two visions are parenthetic, like those of chapter seven, they are more directly related to the dramatic movement of the book; they close with the words "the second woe is past." The "first" and "second" "woes," however, were coincident with the first and second "trumpets." Therefore the Episode (10: 1–11: 14) corresponds with the second trumpet and its events belong to the time of that trumpet (9: 13–21), namely the second "Woe-Trumpet." These words "the second woe is past" also connect these events with those which immediately follow, i.e., with those of the seventh Trumpet, which is identified with the Third Woe. So the additional words, "behold the third woe cometh quickly," mark the transition from the Episode (10: 1–11: 14) to the Consummation, under the Seventh Trumpet (11: 15–19), when "the mystery of God is finished."

Consummation

THE SEVENTH TRUMPET. Ch. 11: 15–19.

15 And the seventh angel sounded; and there followed great voices in heaven, and they said,
The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ: and he shall reign for ever and ever.

16 And the four and twenty elders, who sit before God on their thrones, fell upon their faces and worshipped God, 17 saying,

> **We give thee thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, who art and who wast; because thou hast taken thy great power, and didst reign. 18 And the nations were wroth, and thy wrath came, and the time of the dead to be judged, and the time to give their reward to thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and to them that fear thy name, the small and the great; and to destroy them that destroy the earth.**

19 And there was opened the temple of God that is in heaven; and there was seen in his temple the ark of his covenant; and there followed lightnings, and voices, and thunders, and an earthquake, and great hail.

The Seventh Trumpet sounds, and great respondent voices in heaven proclaim at once (passing over all intermediate events of resurrection and wrath for which the Elders render thanks), that the once far off goal of all the great movements in heaven and on earth has been attained, the universal and everlasting Kingdom of Jehovah and his Anointed; "the mystery of God is finished." But all this involves the removal of the Church, before the Vials of wrath are emptied. While this announcement of the Sovereignty is here at the close of the Tribulation, in the recurrent Vision of "the rest of her seed" it is heard at the beginning of the Tribulation, and again finally, just before the "Word of God" goes forth to war and the final Wrath is poured out. 10: 7; 11: 15; 12: 10–12; 19: 6–7.

The Seventh Trumpet sounds, therefore, through all the Vial time or Third Woe and beyond to the Inauguration of the Kingdom.

On the other hand, in such symbolic phrase and identifying names like Abaddon or Apollyon, this "star fallen from heaven to earth" may be the Devil himself who for a time holds the key of the Abyss until a Mightier

than he takes it and casts him into the Abyss for the Thousand Years. 20: 1.

These two Trumpets belong to the period of the Tribulation, after the conflict with Michael and his angels, when the devil and his angels are cast out from heaven into the earth and instigate the "beasts" and their adherents to persecute the saints. The demonic powers of the Abyss are then at work for the "time, times and half a time."

Thus the Seventh Trumpet, or "Third Woe," closes the array of appalling plagues when the wrath falls upon beasts and their armies and kings and cities and nations.

It had been before said of this trumpet that when it would begin to sound "then is finished the mystery of God" and "the kingdom of the world becomes the Kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever." 10: 7; 11: 15; 19: 1–21.

It is also made known that when the Seventh Trumpet sounds the saints have been raised from the dead and the Lord has come for them. From this again it is inferred that it sounds after the great tribulation in which these saints were, and that it is equivalent to or includes the seven vials of wrath; and likewise its events come under the Seventh Seal. Of it is said "And when he opened the seventh seal there followed a silence in heaven about the space of half an hour." 8: 1.

This too would correspond to the other and latest statement before the Seven Vials are poured out, that then "none was able to enter into the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels should be finished." 15: 5–8.

It should be observed that the Seventh Seal does not contain the Trumpets which follow; its equivalent is in the Seventh Trumpet and the Seven Vials.

It should be noted further that there are Seven Final events leading to the establishment of the Kingdom of the Messiah; viz.: 1, Peace; 2, War; 3, Famine; 4, Pestilence; 5, Tribulation; 6, Signs; 7, Wrath.

This order is a clue to and the test of every interpre-

tation of the Visions of the Apocalypse. It is the order of the Seals opened by the Lamb once slain; but while the contents of the Six Seals are revealed, all that is said of the Seventh Seal is, "And when he opened the seventh seal there followed a silence in heaven about the space of half an hour." 8: 1. The query at once arises as to its contents. Adhering to the order mentioned, the Seventh Seal should be the time of the Wrath, and as coinciding with the wrath of the Seventh Trumpet; and so it is declared. A number of particulars are announced as to this Trumpet; viz. the vindication and rewards of the resurrected saints and servants of God; which implies that the Return of the Lord has taken place and this Return as after the Tribulation of the Fifth Seal and during the Signs of the Sixth. Matt. 24: 29–31. And all these lead on to the Seventh Trumpet at which the Messianic Kingdom is announced. 11: 15–18.

The very "silence in heaven" of the Seventh Seal is in contrast with the "great voices in heaven" of the Seventh Trumpet announcing that the Kingdom had come and that the Wrath had come.

But in further confirmation of the view that the last of the Seals corresponds to the last of the Trumpets as the time of the Wrath, note that "the silence in heaven" always in ancient prophecy is ominous of impending judgments of Jehovah. Before the great theophany described by Habakkuk, it is said, "But the Lord is in his holy temple, let all the earth keep silence before him." 1: 20. And the prophet Zechariah exclaims in view of all Jehovah will yet do for Israel and Jerusalem, "Be silent all flesh before the Lord, for he is waked up out of his holy habitation." 2: 13.

The account of the Seventh Seal closes with the mention of certain great portents "lightnings, thunderings, and an earthquake and great hail." Such portents occur in the Revelation when great crises are predicted.

The first mention of them is in the Vision of the Great Throne (4: 5) as indicating that from the throne of God all the judgments proceed.

At the next mention, when the Seven Trumpets are given to the seven angels at the altar of intercession, an "earthquake" is added to the other portents, and this appears at the ascension of the Two Witnesses. 8: 5; 11: 13.

At this third time both an earthquake and great hail are mentioned (11: 19). These portents mark the close of the prophecies recorded in what may be regarded as the first half of the Book. Similar portents under the seventh Vial may indicate its relation to this seventh Trumpet.

It may be added by way of anticipation that in the first half of the Revelation (Chs. 1–11), the Kingdom is announced in association with the resurrection of the saints and servants of God, and this is followed by the Wrath on the ungodly; 11: 15–18; and in the Second Part (Chs. 12–22) it is announced in association with the marriage of the Lamb and the going forth of the King of Kings to tread the winepress of the Wrath of Armageddon. 19: 6–21.

IV. The Seven Personages

Introductory Vision

THE TWO SIGNS IN HEAVEN. Chs. 12: 1–13: 1(a).

1 And a great sign was seen in heaven: a woman arrayed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars; 2 and she was with child; and she crieth out, travailing in birth, and in pain to be delivered. 3 And there was seen another sign in heaven; and behold, a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his heads seven diadems. 4 And his tail draweth the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon standeth before the woman that is about to be delivered, that when she is delivered he may devour her child. 5 And she was delivered of a son, a man child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and unto his throne. 6 And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that there they may nourish her a thousand two hundred and threescore days. 7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels going forth to war with the dragon; and the dragon warred and his angels; 8 and they prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven. 9 And the great dragon was cast down, the old serpent, he that is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world; he was cast down to the earth, and his angels were cast down with him. 10 And I heard a great voice in heaven, saying,

> **Now is come the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accuseth them before our God day and night. 11 And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their**

testimony; and they loved not their life even unto death. 12 Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe for the earth and for the sea: because the devil is gone down unto you, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time. 13 And when the dragon saw that he was cast down to the earth, he persecuted the woman that brought forth the man child. 14 And there were given to the woman the two wings of the great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness unto her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. 15 And the serpent cast out of his mouth after the woman water as a river, that he might cause her to be carried away by the stream. 16 And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth and swallowed up the river which the dragon cast out of his mouth. 17 And the dragon waxed wroth with the woman, and went away to make war with the rest of her seed, that keep the commandments of God, and hold the testimony of Jesus:

1(a) And he stood upon the sand of the sea.

From the Consummation at the Seventh Trumpet, to which the movement of the previous prophetic scenes led, the Vision returns to a time anterior to all, to the sun-clothed Woman and the "great red dragon." They are called great Signs or Wonders, most notable, most momentous.

The great central section of the book (Chs. 12–14) brings to view seven great personages or "signs" or actors. They are the Woman, her Son, the "Rest of Her Seed," the Dragon, the Archangel, and the two Beasts.

This introductory vision shows that it is the Dragon, the Devil, who opposes God in his gracious purpose concerning the redemption of his people and the establishment of the Messianic Kingdom. He is seen in the following vision (Ch. 13) as the instigator and empowerer of the Beasts, but here in advance as one overcome by Michael and his angels who stand up for Israel. Of old, Daniel beheld what John now sees, the same evil

angels of the then unnamed Dragon warring against those of Michael and instigating them in their attempts to thwart the good intentions of the world power of Persia toward Israel. Dan. 10: 12–20.

First appears in this great Vision the scene of the Woman and the Son and the Dragon; then, before the further career of the Woman in the days of the great Tribulation is shown there intervenes the war of Michael against the Dragon which precedes the time of trouble, in which the "rest of her seed" suffer and overcome. 12: 10–11.

That the Woman is Israel, and her Son the Messiah, should not be a matter of doubt. The imagery of Joseph's dream, of sun and moon and stars, concerning the twelve-tribed nation, may at least suggest that the Woman represents Israel. But it is the ideal Israel and that as represented in a later day by such righteous ones of the nation as a Zacharias and Elisabeth, a Mary and Anna and Simeon.

And further, to attest this view that the Woman and her Child belong in the Vision to a time anterior to all the Visions and therefore earlier than the time of the Beast and of her own flight into the "wilderness," it is sufficient to note that the "diadems" are seen on the "heads of the Dragon" and not as later on the "horns of the Beast." The Dragon is the authority behind the world power at each time, but in this Vision the "diadems" on him indicate that it was a time of sole imperialism when the Woman gave birth to the Son, whom the Dragon, as in Herod's day sought to destroy. Later, the diadems appear on the "horns" of the Beast whom the Dragon empowers.

As to the Woman and the "earth," and the "waters" with which the Dragon would overwhelm her, the symbolic words suggest her deliverance from lawless, raging enemies.

Also, in prophetic language the nations are viewed as a "wilderness," in which Israel temporarily lives.

That the Man Child is the Messiah should hardly be

called into question. In various Scriptures it is one and the same person who is to rule with a rod of iron; and to confirm all, the very promise of the same iron rule, is made to the Church, "the Body of Christ;" and if to the "Body" of which Christ is "the Head," then the two are conjunct in such rule and the Man Child is such Head. The name "rest of her seed," viewing the Man Child of the Woman as Christ, suggests that thereby is meant *the Christian Church* which the Dragon endeavours to destroy.

Progression

THE TWO BEASTS AND THE GREAT TRIBULATION.
Ch. 13: 1(b)–18.

1(b) And I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns ten diadems, and upon his heads names of blasphemy. 2 And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his throne, and great authority. 3 And I saw one of his heads as though it had been smitten unto death; and his death-stroke was healed: and the whole earth wondered after the beast; 4 and they worshipped the dragon, because he gave his authority unto the beast; and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? and who is able to war with him? 5 and there was given to him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and there was given to him authority to continue forty and two months. 6 And he opened his mouth for blasphemies against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, even them that dwell in the heaven. 7 And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and there was given to him authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation. 8 And all that dwell on the earth shall worship him, every one whose name hath not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that hath been slain. 9 If any man hath an ear, let him hear. 10 If any man is for

captivity, into captivity he goeth; if any man shall kill with the sword, with the sword must he be killed. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints. 11 And I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like unto a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. 12 And he exerciseth all the authority of the first beast in his sight. And he maketh the earth and them that dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose death-stroke was healed. 13 And he doeth great signs, that he should even make fire to come down out of heaven upon the earth in the sight of men. 14 And he deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by reason of the signs which it was given him to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast who hath the stroke of the sword and lived. 15 And it was given unto him to give breath to it, even to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as should not worship the image of the beast should be killed. 16 And he causeth all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free and the bond, that there be given them a mark on their right hand, or upon their forehead; 17 and that no man should be able to buy or to sell, save he that hath the mark, even the name of the beast or the number of his name. 18 Here is wisdom. He that hath understanding, let him count the number of the beast; for it is the number of a man: and his number is Six hundred and sixty and six.

The Vision of the Sun-Clad Woman or Daughter of Zion and her Son, of the great Dragon and the war in heaven, of the persecution of the Woman and the tribulation of "the rest of her seed" (Ch. 12), was preparatory to the Vision of the two Beasts as the great actors in the world-wide tribulation in which both Jews and Gentiles suffer, as already depicted under the "woes" of the fifth and sixth Trumpets.

The time of the origin of the ten-horned Beast is a crisis in the history of the world. He is seen "coming up out of the sea," which is symbolic of an emergence out of a condition of tumult and confusion among the nations.

In the light of other prophetic words, there has been a subversion of law and order, civil and political; lawlessness prevails; all restraints have been removed, and out of this anarchy rises one of all-quelling despotic power bringing to the peoples again order indeed, but only to arrogate to himself all authority divine and human, and to become the embodiment of a lawlessness worse and more fatal to the nations than that out of which he rose.

In depicting such a momentous crisis in world history, the visions of Daniel and of John in large measure agree. Both predict the existence of ten kings, and the rise of the eleventh horn.

However, John beheld also a "Beast" Daniel did not see; the two-horned, lamblike, dragon-tongued supporter of the ten-horned Beast in his blasphemous claim of divine worship. This second Beast, as will be shown later, is inseparable from Christendom, from its originally formative doctrines which relate to Christ, his person and his work. This Beast was not possible in Daniel's day; he is a product of a civilization and an inheritor of ideas peculiar to the centuries of the Christian Church, and he is the perverter and denier of all that is Christian.

On comparing the Scriptures concerning "the beast" or "little horn" and the "man of sin," and the "beast out of the sea," it is evident that one and the same person is meant. The characteristics and deeds and destiny are identical. The Gentile world power is his as its final possessor. His conspicuous claim is the worship of himself as God. This Beast comes up out of the tumultuous "sea" of nations; the two-horned Beast comes "out of the earth;" the former out of anarchy, the latter out of consolidated law and order. Dan. 7: 1–28; II Th. 2: 1–12; Rev. 13: 1–18.

The first Beast performs no miracles; the language of Paul concerning him does not positively affirm that he does; it simply associates lying wonders with his coming; the second Beast performs the lying wonders to deceive men to worship the first, "the man of sin." The latter is the god, the former his prophet; the one sways the

scepter of universal power, the other teaches world-wide doctrines of blasphemy against God and Christ, and uses that power to compel the assent and obedience of men to the claims of the "lawless one." This antichristian "prophet" full of the spirit of Satan reminds one, in his origin, character and deeds and doctrines more of the Antichrist of the epistles of John than of "the man of sin" described by Paul and Daniel. II Th. 2: 1–10.

The name "Antichrist" has been so long applied to the latter that it may seem strange to call into question the propriety of such application. Both Beasts are verily antichrists as opposers of Christ, both are the agents of the Dragon and empowered by him in his efforts against God and Christ, but the first Beast is more than an antichrist; he is a false Christ in relation to the Jew, is secular and imperial, while the office of the lamb-like Beast is spiritual and religious. Their opposition in doctrine is against the Jehovah of the Israelite and the Christ of the Church; and as to rule, they rage against Jehovah and his Messiah. The "mystery of lawlessness" which was to be consummated in the coming of the "lawless one," was already working in the early years of the Church; and in the later years there were many antichrists forerunners of the Antichrist, false prophets to be followed by the one great "false prophet," also many false Messiahs to be followed at last by the one, great and final false Messiah. He will be preeminently "the lawless one." Both "beasts" are deceivers as is the devil who uses them. The one is the Lie of whom Paul speaks, the other the Liar foretold by John; and the devil the father of both.

"The Liar" of John's epistles will uphold "the Lie" of Paul's; the "Antichrist" of the Church will be the deceiver in behalf of the false Messiah of the Jews; the denier of the Son will demand obedience to the substitute of the Son.

For both the masterpiece of Satan will be prepared, the new religion of antichristianity. The old Christianity will be deemed, as even now by many, to have outlived

itself. In its stead appears a blasphemous mimicry of the old in doctrines and forms; man its god and object of worship; dragon, beast, and prophet an infernal trinity opposing Father, Son and Holy Spirit each in his own sphere of salvation; all is demonic in signs and miracles attesting his Lie by which opposers of the Truth will be deluded. The confession of the Father and the Son through the Holy Spirit will be supplanted by the Confession of the Dragon and the Beast through the lying spirit of the false Prophet.

In the return of imperialism through the sovereignty of the Beast and the dechristianization of all that once constituted the governments of Christendom, the "deadly wound" (the death stroke) of ancient imperialism is healed and the nations return to their original, godless civilization and culture. It will be a gigantic final attempt of men to realize the primal lie of the serpent "ye shall be as gods," whose poison infused into the heart of man with the first sin has been transmitted from generation to generation ever since.

The Creed of the Antichrist will be:

1. "No personal God without and above the universe.
2. "Man is himself his own God and the god of this world.
3. "I am the representative of humanity; by worshipping me, humanity worships itself."—*Godet.*

Episode

THE FIRST FRUITS AND THE THREE ANGELS. Ch. 14: 1–13.

1 And I saw, and behold, the Lamb standing on the mount Zion, and with him a hundred and forty and four thousand, having his name, and the name of his Father, written on their foreheads. 2 And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and the voice which I heard was as the voice of harpers harping with their harps: 3 and they sing as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four living creatures and

the elders: and no man could learn the song save the hundred and forty and four thousand, even they that had been purchased out of the earth. 4 These are they that were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they that follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were purchased from among men, to be the first-fruits unto God and unto the Lamb. 5 And in their mouth was found no lie: they are without blemish. 6 And I saw another angel flying in mid heaven, having eternal good tidings to proclaim unto them that dwell on the earth, and unto every nation and tribe and tongue and people; 7 and he saith with a great voice, Fear God, and give him glory; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made the heaven and the earth and sea and fountains of waters. 8 And another, a second angel, followed, saying, Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, that hath made all the nations to drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. 9 And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a great voice, If any man worshippeth the beast and his image, and receiveth a mark on his forehead, or upon his hand, 10 he also shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is prepared unmixed in the cup of his anger; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb; 11 and the smoke of their torment goeth up for ever and ever; and they have no rest day and night, they that worship the beast and his image, and whoso receiveth the mark of his name. 12 Here is the patience of the saints, they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. 13 And I heard a voice from heaven saying, Write, Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; for their works follow with them.

Here again is an interlude. As between the sixth and seventh Seals, and between the sixth and seventh Trumpets, so here, in the midst of the dramatic movement, occurs this Episode. The purpose is the same as that of the other Episodes. It is to console and to encourage the people of God. Such is the intent of the vision of the First Fruits and of the message of the

Three Angels. Like all the Episodes of the Apocalypse, this is both restrospective and prospective. It retrogresses to the very beginning of the great tribulation which is viewed in 13: 1–18 as past, and thus as an Episode it is Retrospective in its warnings against the Worship of the Beast and in its word of comfort to the Martyrs. It is also prospective in announcing the Judgment to come.

It is taught by some that these First Fruits represent a class of Christians who now any day even before the "end of the age" may be removed from the earth into glory while the rest of the Church will be left to the time of the Tribulation.

It is enough to answer that first fruits always belong to a harvest, and the harvest of parables and prophecy belongs to the "end of the age," and that therefore even if such a special class of Christians exist, they cannot be removed very long before the time of the Harvest.

On the other hand, it is more likely in view of the time of sifting and in view of the peculiar character given them and in contrast with "Babylon" and her "daughters" (whose fall is announced in this same Epitome) that they are the Church in her ideal character, even the "people of God" who came out of "Babylon" before her destruction by the Beast and his Kings. Three things are spoken of the "first fruits": 1, that they are virgins undefiled with women, that is, with "the harlots" of Babylon; 2, that in their mouth was found no lie, that is, they have nought to do with the lies of this time of the great liar, the Man of Sin; and 3, "they are without blemish," which is the character and standing of the saints of the elect Church of the Epistles. Also, they have the name of the Lamb and his Father's name written on their foreheads, two of the three names to be written upon the overcomers of the Church in Philadelphia. It is as such, purified and pure, she is seen as proleptic of her pure and perfect presentation to the Lord with whom she is to be and whom she is to follow forevermore.

This is the procedure predicted for the people of God; they first are disciplined through persecution of enemies, and then, in turn, the latter are punished. Judgment begins at the house of God; the Tribulation will separate the wheat from the chaff. I Pet. 4: 17; Prov 11: 31; Jer. 25: 29; Is. 10: 12.

In addition to this, the evident typical teaching of the first fruits in Leviticus should not be slighted. Both the Passover sheaf and the Pentecost sheaf are termed the "first fruits"; the former, that of Christ, is for our "acceptance," the Church is accepted in Christ and is as he is; and the latter, that of the Church, is "for the Priest"; i. e., Christ. Also, the "barley" and the "wheat" are spoken of as one harvest. In view of all this, these redeemed ones should not be regarded as a holier and more worthy number of the Church who would be removed from the earth before the reaping of the rest, but rather as the "Body of Christ," now corresponding to the ideal holiness and unity which is always set before her. Levit. 23: 4–22; Eph. 5: 22–23.

Consummation

THE HARVEST AND THE VINTAGE. Ch. 14: 14–20.

14 And I saw, and behold, a white cloud; and on the cloud I saw one sitting like unto a son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. 15 And another angel came out from the temple, crying with a great voice to him that sat on the cloud, Send forth thy sickle, and reap: for the hour to reap is come; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. 16 And he that sat on the cloud cast his sickle upon the earth; and the earth was reaped. 17 And another angel came out from the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. 18 And another angel came out from the altar, he that hath power over fire; and he called with a great voice to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Send forth thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. 19 And the angel cast his sickle into the earth, and gathered the

vintage of the earth, and cast it into the winepress, the great winepress, of the wrath of God. 20 And the winepress was trodden without the city, and there came out blood from the winepress, even unto the bridles of the horses, as far as a thousand and six hundred furlongs.

The Harvest and the Vintage cannot be viewed as two aspects of the judgment on the enemies of God. When the treading of the winepress is described, there is nothing corresponding to the Harvest. On the other hand, the very imagery of "the Son of Man on a white cloud," sending forth his sickle of angel-reapers, agrees with various Scriptures concerning the Parousia of Christ for the saints. The parable of the wheat and tares in the gospel of Matthew and this Vision mutually interpret each other.

What additional events besides those of the gathering of the tares and garnering of the wheat belong to this "time of the harvest" must be learned from other Scriptures. The parable confines itself to the two. Of these the gathering of the tares comes first. It accordingly precedes the garnering of the wheat which in other prophetic language is called the Rapture of the saints to meet the Lord at his Coming. The tares, however, are not burned until after the garnering of the wheat; the saints are delivered from the wrath to come; but the deliverance and the wrath are not far apart.

The gathering of the tares and the garnering of the wheat predicted in the Parable have a remarkable confirmation, both as to the agency of angels and the order of events in the Visions of this Epitome of the "end." It is also suggestive that the preaching foretold in this Epitome is of a character indicating that men have become deniers of God not only as the God of Redemption, but even of God as the Creator. A final appeal is made to the primitive and universal and everlasting revelation of God in "the things that are made."

V. The Seven Vials

Introductory Vision

THE OVERCOMERS AND THE SEVEN ANGELS. Ch. 15: 1–8.

1 And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having seven plagues, which are the last, for in them is finished the wrath of God. 2 And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire; and them that come off victorious from the beast, and from his image, and from the number of his name, standing by the sea of glass, having harps of God. 3 And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying,

> **Great and marvellous are thy works, O Lord God, the Almighty; righteous and true are thy ways, thou King of the ages. 4 Who shall not fear, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy; for all the nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy righteous acts have been made manifest.**

5 And after these things I saw, and the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened: 6 and there came out from the temple the seven angels that had the seven plagues, arrayed with precious stone, pure and bright, and girt about their breasts with golden girdles. 7 And one of the four living creatures gave unto the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever. 8 And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and none was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels should be finished.

The third of the three great "signs" or wonders seen in heaven introduces the Visions of the Seven Vials. The other two great Signs were the Sun-clad Woman and the

Dragon. This Sign is seen in a Vision by itself and so is one of momentous meaning. 15: 1.

The second Vision discloses the Overcomers who were in the Tribulation standing by the glory-reddened sea and singing the song of Moses and the Lamb. The scene is antitypical to the exodus and the deliverance of Israel. The combination of Moses and the Lamb suggests the overcomers are both Jews and Gentiles and as of one body. 15: 2–4.

In this introductory Vision, the Holy of Holies in heaven was opened, the Seven Angels came forth with the bowls of wrath, and as of old, in the day of Moses and of Solomon, again "the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power; and none was able to enter into the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels should be finished." 15: 5–8.

The scene preparatory to the outpouring of the Seven Vials and the Vials themselves are all comprehended by one "And I saw," so implying both a unity of purpose and an uninterrupted continuity of occurrence. 16: 1–21.

Progression

THE SIX VIALS. Ch. 16: 1–12.

1 And I heard a great voice out of the temple, saying to the seven angels, Go ye, and pour out the seven bowls of the wrath of God into the earth. 2 And the first went, and poured out his bowl into the earth; and it became a noisome and grievous sore upon the men that had the mark of the beast, and that worshipped his image. 3 And the second poured out his bowl into the sea; and it became blood as of a dead man; and every living soul died, even the things that were in the sea. 4 And the third poured out his bowl into the rivers and the fountains of the waters; and it became blood. 5 And I heard the angel of the waters saying, Righteous art thou, who art and who wast, thou Holy One, because thou didst thus judge: 6 for they poured out the blood of saints and prophets, and blood hast thou given them to drink: they are worthy. 7 And I heard the altar saying, Yea, O Lord

God, the Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments. 8 And the fourth poured out his bowl upon the sun; and it was given unto it to scorch men with fire. 9 And men were scorched with great heat: and they blasphemed the name of God who hath the power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory. 10 And the fifth poured out his bowl upon the throne of the beast; and his kingdom was darkened; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, 11 and they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores; and they repented not of their works. 12 And the sixth poured out his bowl upon the great river, the river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way might be made ready for the kings that come from the sunrising.

The Seven Vials, or the "Third Woe," taken together may constitute the Seventh Seal or the Consummation, in an extended form; but the Seventh Trumpet sounds beyond them to the establishment of the Kingdom itself. When this Seventh Seal is opened (Ch. 8: 1) all that is said of it is "there followed a silence in heaven about the space of half an hour." That this Seal has no immediate connection with the six Trumpets which follow in the context has already been shown in that there follows an additional prophetic formula, "And I saw," so introducing the Trumpets as new matter; accordingly, the Seventh Seal is not the hinge for, or the container of the Trumpets. Its contents belong to a future vision of the Consummation. The wrath of the Seventh Trumpet is sevenfold as seen in the Seven Vials. The very silence, as previously stated, reminds of other prophetic Scriptures where Jehovah is seen coming forth in a *final* avengement of his people.

"Be silent O all flesh before Jehovah,
For he is raised up out of his holy habitation."

8: 1; Hab. 2: 20; Zeph. 1: 7; Zech. 2: 13.

Likewise, when the Seven Vials are being emptied no one can enter the Sanctuary until their plagues are finished. It is suggestive, too, that just as Jericho was com-

passed with the blowing of trumpets once each day for six days, but seven times on the seventh day, so, when in the Apocalypse six Trumpets have finished their sounding, the Seventh ushers in the Seven Vials and together these constitute the Consummation—the Seventh Seal.

Also, in favour of such a period of time for the Wrath, let it be noted, that the equivalent of the phrase "the coming of the Son of man" in one Scripture is "days of the Son of Man" in another; "a day of the Son of Man" signifying a day of deliverance. The first act of Messianic deliverance will be the removal of the Church; and the "days" are equivalent to successive strokes of wrath.

In passing, it may be suggested that the Seer was told to seal up and not write the things which the seven Thunders uttered, because for aught we know they belonged to the Seventh Seal whose contents were not to be disclosed till the Vial time, and if so, they are the equivalents of the Seven Plagues of the wrath and power of God.

They seem to imply that now the great redemption has been accomplished, the iniquity removed, and the Jubilee proclaimed, for in the types of old, the atonement and the jubilee came on the same day, making it at once a "day of restraint," a solemn close and review of an eventful past, but opening also on a new age of perpetual peace and universal divine blessing. In brief, the great Inauguration of the Kingdom, may be intimated in such promise of blessed days; or in those of the great "Marriage Supper of the Lamb," or in the following kindred Scriptures: "And when he again bringeth in the first born into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him;" "For not unto angels did he subject the world to come"—"There remaineth therefore a rest (Sabbatismos), for the people of God." Lev. 25: 29; Heb. 1: 6; 2: 5; 4: 9; Ps. 93 to 100.

Episode

THE GATHERING OF THE KINGS. Ch. 16: 13–16.

13 And I saw coming out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits, as it were frogs: 14 for they are spirits of demons, working signs; which go forth unto the kings of the whole world, to gather them together unto the war of the great day of God, the Almighty. 15 (Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.) 16 And they gathered them together into the place which is called in Hebrew Har-Magedon.

This vision of three froglike demonic spirits, which go forth to gather the kings to battle, is a parenthetic episode.

Since believers are told their redemption is nigh when the signs begin, and that the day of the Lord "shall not overtake them," it is evident that the Rapture of the Church takes place before any of the Vials of wrath are poured out, and not at the point between the sixth and seventh Vials where the warning is sounded, "Behold I come as a thief." This warning of the approach of the Advent is in a parenthetic vision of the gathering of the kings between the sixth and seventh Vials, and as has been shown, in each case of an Episode between a sixth and seventh (seals and trumpets) the events of the Episode antedate at least the Sixth. This is true of the Seals, for the 144,000 of Israel and those seen coming out of the great Tribulation belong to the Fifth Seal. In the historic fulfilment the Tribulation of the Fifth Seal will come before the Signs of the Sixth and this before the "day of the Lord" or "wrath" of the Seventh. I Th. 5: 1–10; Luke 21: 28; 7: 1–17.

This is also true of the Episode between the Sixth and Seventh Trumpets, for in the words of the angel to John, there is an intimation of a return to scenes with which

his previous visions had to do. In view of this law of the Episode, the Advent forewarned in the Episode between the Sixth and Seventh Vials should antedate all the Vials. An analogy would be seen in Israel's exemption from the last seven plagues which came only upon the Egyptians. After the seven plagues came the overthrow in the Red Sea, so after seven "vials" comes Harmagedon and the overthrow of "Beasts" and armies and kings. Likewise the summons of the demons, found in this same Episode, for the gathering of the kings to battle, can antedate the Sixth Vial and even all the Vials. It should also be recalled that in the holy ascription concerning him "who is and was and who is to come," the words "to come" are omitted at the Third Vial. All this proves that the saints are removed before the wrath begins to be poured, and accords with the scene and song of the overcomers by the glory-reddened sea, who are now safely housed in the glory of heaven, while the judgments of God are made manifest on earth. See similar events in Israel's history where no one could enter the sanctuary. 10: 1–11, 14; Exod. 9; 40: 34–35; II Chr. 5: 13–14.

Consummation

THE SEVENTH VIAL. Ch. 16: 17–21.

17 And the seventh poured out his bowl upon the air; and there came forth a great voice out of the temple, from the throne, saying, It is done; 18 and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunders; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since there were men upon the earth, so great an earthquake, so mighty. 19. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and Babylon the great was remembered in the sight of God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. 20 And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. 21 And great hail, every stone about the weight of a talent, cometh down out of heaven upon men: and men

blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof is exceeding great.

Here are pictured the final and comprehensive judgments upon the enemies of God. Yet what is here mentioned in mere outline, is narrated in detail in visions which follow. The battle of Armageddon is yet to be described. "Great Babylon" has come into remembrance before God; but her destruction is to be the most impressive of all the pictures of punishment and doom which fill the ensuing visions (Chs. 17–19) and prepare for the closing scenes of splendour, the glories of the "new heaven" and the "new earth."

VI. The Seven Dooms

Introduction

BABYLON AND THE BEAST. Ch. 17: 1–18.

1 And there came one of the seven angels that had the seven bowls, and spake with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the judgment of the great harlot that sitteth upon many waters; 2 with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and they that dwell in the earth were made drunken with the wine of her fornication. 3 And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness: and I saw a woman sitting upon a scarlet-coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. 4 And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and decked with gold and precious stone and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations, even the unclean things of her fornication, 5 and upon her forehead a name written, Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of the Harlots and of the Abominations of the Earth. 6 And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I wondered with a great wonder. 7 And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou wonder? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and the ten horns. 8 The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and is about to come up out of the abyss, and to go into perdition. And they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, they whose name hath not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast, how that he was, and is not, and shall come. 9 Here is the mind that hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth: 10 and they are seven kings; the five are fallen, the one is, the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must

continue a little while. 11 And the beast that was, and is not, is himself also an eighth, and is of the seven; and he goeth into perdition. 12 And the ten horns that thou sawest are ten kings, who have received no kingdom as yet; but they receive authority as kings, with the beast, for one hour. 13 These have one mind, and they give their power and authority unto the beast. 14 These shall war against the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them, for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings; and they also shall overcome that are with him, called and chosen and faithful. 15 And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the harlot sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. 16 And the ten horns which thou sawest, and the beast, these shall hate the harlot, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and shall burn her utterly with fire. 17 For God did put in their hearts to do his mind, and to come to one mind, and to give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God should be accomplished. 18 And the woman whom thou sawest is the great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.

"Babylon" and "as fallen" was first mentioned and without explanation in an earlier vision. 14: 1–20. In this present vision one of the Vial angels describes her character, deeds and career in connection with the world power.

As introductory to the study of this great subject, attention is called to certain facts concerning the time of her existence. If the Beast which destroys her belongs to a future day, she does also. It is also revealed that she existed before his day and that of the "ten kings" allied with him.

Turning to the interpretation of the "Mystery of the Woman" she is first shown in consummate form "sitting upon a scarlet coloured beast." Then another "and I saw," with significant brevity to indicate a dreadful charge of blood guiltiness that must be pondered by itself, leads to the explanation given by the angel: she is

seen " drunken with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus." 17: 6.

This charge is again made in the conclusion of the account of her fall: " And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints and of all that have been slain upon the earth." 18: 24.

In her is found the martyr blood of a historic past, pagan and papal, present and future. She fills up the cup of iniquity of all past years since Jerusalem's day when the latter had attained the same unholy preeminence. Matt. 23: 34–36; Rev. 18: 24.

It is the picture of a corrupt religious system gradually filled with a spirit of lukewarmness and indifference and a false charity covering a multitude of errors, she has become apostate and anti-christian, her corporate testimony lost, and a demoniac hatred of the truth urging her on to a persecution of the saints and faithful of God. For all this and her love of the world, using its power arrayed in its glory, she is delivered to the Beast and his Kings for utter destruction.

A distinction must be made between " Babylon " as a system and as a city of the world. It is only to a system the words can apply, " Come out of her, my people," when the " Beast " and his ten Kings are about to destroy her. This destruction takes place before the literal city is destroyed by the wrath of God at the last Vial, after the close of the Week. This must be so, even though system and city in the prophetic vision are seen so intimately conjoined and their characters interchanged. As the people and institutions of any city are called by the same name as its buildings, streets and parks, so " Babylon the great " is the name of both the city and the apostate system.

And surely when the literal city falls under the final wrath, the Seventh Vial, there will be no people of God in her to come forth, nor merchants and mariners to bewail their loss, for then the end of Gentile civilization will have come.

In the explanation of the " Mystery " there is a ret-

rospect over the entire past times of the great Empires of Gentile history which had to do with Israel, and later, with the Church.

The Woman is seen seated upon the Beast in its sum total of the imperial and kingly powers.

Seven are world empires; but between the sixth and the seventh come ten kingdoms, so forming, in all, eight world powers. Out of the "ten horns" arises an eleventh, who subduing three, secures the allegiance of all, and becomes the head of a final or seventh world empire; he is of the seven world emperors, but the eighth world power. Dan. 7: 8, 20.

The explanation of the angel ends with "a definite statement" which apparently identifies the "Woman" with Rome: "And the woman which thou sawest is that great city which holdeth sovereignty over the kings of the earth." 17: 18.

But in the light of the history of Christendom and the perspective of prophecy, it is Rome neither pagan nor papal, but Babylonian. Pagan Rome was never a false woman towards God or Christ, papal Rome has been so in her partial sovereignty over the European world powers, but "Babylon" includes more in her power and extent; she is the "Mother of the harlots" of all Christendom; and true to the historic instinct, she may seek to be rooted in the marvelous past of a great imperial city and thus secure the prestige of its history.

But she is Babylonian; the Rome of the Cæsars becomes the locale and heir of the idolatry and worldliness and persecuting spirit of the Babylon on the Euphrates. She would fain reproduce, as a religious system, ancient Babylonian rite and ceremony and doctrine, and thus become a Jerusalem also to the religious world, merging a Rome and a Babylon and a Jerusalem into one.

The Beast, on the other hand, though at first supporting the Woman in her city, would strike the roots of his power and authority into a religious past more potent and universal than that of Rome and would make the Jerusalem of the Holy Land the place of worship, the

joy of the whole earth, the religious metropolis of the world. There in its temple he seats himself as God, and there in the Holy Land he comes to his end as the greatest enemy of God the centuries have produced. Whatever other world-city or seat of secular imperial authority he may make his own, the religious capital will be the preëminent one.

Progression

THE DOOM OF BABYLON. Ch. 18: 1–24.

1 After these things I saw another angel coming down out of heaven, having great authority; and the earth was lightened with his glory. 2 And he cried with a mighty voice, saying, Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, and is become a habitation of demons, and a hold of every unclean spirit, and a hold of every unclean and hateful bird. 3 For by the wine of the wrath of her fornication all the nations are fallen; and the kings of the earth committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth waxed rich by the power of her wantonness. 4 And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come forth, my people, out of her, that ye have no fellowship with her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues: 5 for her sins have reached even unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. 6 Render unto her even as she rendered, and double unto her the double according to her works: in the cup which she mingled, mingle unto her double. 7 How much soever she glorified herself, and waxed wanton, so much give her of torment and mourning: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall in no wise see mourning. 8 Therefore in one day shall her plagues come, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire; for strong is the Lord God who judged her. 9 And the kings of the earth, who committed fornication and lived wantonly with her, shall weep and wail over her, when they look upon the smoke of her burning, 10 standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Woe, woe, the great city, Babylon, the strong city! for in one hour is thy judgment come. 11 And the mer-

chants of the earth weep and mourn over her, for no man buyeth their merchandise any more; 12 merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stone, and pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet; and all thyine wood, and every vessel of ivory, and every vessel made of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble; 13 and cinnamon, and spice, and incense, and ointment, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and cattle, and sheep; and merchandise of horses and chariots and slaves; and souls of men. 14 And the fruits which thy soul lusted after are gone from thee, and all things that were dainty and sumptuous are perished from thee, and men shall find them no more at all. 15 The merchants of these things, who were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and mourning; 16 saying, Woe, woe, the great city, she that was arrayed in fine linen and purple and scarlet, and decked with gold and precious stone and pearl! 17 for in one hour so great riches is made desolate. And every shipmaster, and every one that saileth any whither, and mariners, and as many as gain their living by sea, stood afar off, 18 and cried out as they looked upon the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like the great city? 19 And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and mourning, saying, Woe, woe, the great city, wherein all that had their ships in the sea were made rich by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate. 20 Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye saints, and ye apostles, and ye prophets; for God hath judged your judgments on her. 21 And a strong angel took up a stone as it were a great millstone and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with a mighty fall shall Babylon, the great city, be cast down, and shall be found no more at all. 22 And the voice of harpers and minstrels and flute-players and trumpeters shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft, shall be found any more at all in thee; and the voice of a mill shall be heard no more at all in thee; 23 and the light of a lamp shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee; for thy merchants were the princes of the earth; for with thy sorcery were all

the nations deceived. 24 And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all that have been slain upon the earth.

In this Vision of Babylon's fall a mighty angel announces and a voice from heaven summons the people of God to come out of her lest they receive of her plagues. Her judgment is then described and the great lamentation over her of kings and merchants and all traffickers by land and sea. To this wail of worldings on earth is heard the response of a great multitude in heaven in Hallelujahs over her judgment. 18: 1–19: 3.

She was a persecuting power before the Beast became one. The martyrs who suffer under him are those of the great Tribulation; her martyrs are those of the Fifth Seal and who are told to wait for their complement of that Tribulation.

It is a popular belief and too sadly justified by her past history that to the Roman Catholic Church should be given the name "Babylon," but the description of the false "Woman" of the Revelation demands a larger fulfilment than "Rome" has furnished. "Babylon" unites all religious systems which are seen as false to God near the close of this "present evil age." The commercialism of "Babylon" does not indicate her city to be a mart of exchange of all manner of goods, but rather an emporium of supply receiving the products of all peoples and lands to meet the demand of her wanton luxuriousness.

On her destruction as a system, there is need of a reconstruction, both of the political and commercial relations of the kingdoms. The kings and merchants deplore her fall, even though they suffered through her arrogance and imperiousness. The wars (14: 8) she instigated and finally her own destruction led to a disorder and anarchy which the strong hand of the Beast alone could suppress. The nations "were made to drink of the wine of the *wrath* of her fornication." But all the Beast does is to aggrandise himself as the sole political, commercial and religious head of the race. Not only "Baby-

lon" the "Woman" does he destroy, but later when baffled in Jerusalem, he endeavours to destroy all that still represents the divine and supernatural on the earth, both Judaism and Christianity, all that once expressed the religious spirit of man in forms of the revealed will of God.

This is the great word concerning him, "There was given to him authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation. And all that dwelt on the earth shall worship him; every one whose name has not been written in the book of life of the Lamb that hath been slain from the foundation of the world." And also, it is written, "that no man should be able to buy or to sell save he that hath the mark, even the name of the beast or the number of his name." 13: 14.

In brief, the name "Babylon the Great" is to be interpreted in the light of the religious and imperial history of a far off past.

There are two and separable elements in the idea "Babylon"; first, a religious system or cult, and second, a culmination and embodiment at last of the religious spirit in a visible Head and his worship.

So in its historic manifestation there have been two stages: the first from the primal Babylon of the one race, language and speech, and its tower and city, to the Babylon of Nebuchadnezzar, ruler over "all the peoples, nations and languages" of the earth, and his city; and the other from Nebuchadnezzar and his city to the close of "the times of the Gentiles" and their city. Gen. 11: 1–9; Dan. 4: 28–33.

At first appeared Babylon as a system, its organizing principle the unification of the race, its central idea the glory of humanity instead of the glory of God, and its rallying cry, "Let *us* build"; and then at last appears the self-deified man, the professed embodiment of the idea of humanity in its supreme greatness and glory; his representative city the symbol of the man-centered religious system whose head and god he has become; and like the first great imperial head of the "times of the

Gentiles," so he the last boasts "Is not this great Babylon that *I* have built?"

"Babylon" as a system corresponds to the first stage of the development of the Babel idea; to the second stage the Beast; the system gives way to an autocratic head. With his destruction, the times of Gentile sovereignty close and the new age of the Kingdom of the Messiah begins.

Episode

THE FOUR HALLELS. Ch. 19: 1–10.

1 After these things I heard as it were a great voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying,

> **Hallelujah; Salvation, and glory, and power, belong to our God: 2 for true and righteous are his judgments; for he hath judged the great harlot, her that corrupted the earth with her fornication, and he hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.**

3 And a second time they say, Hallelujah. And her smoke goeth up for ever and ever. 4 And the four and twenty elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshipped God that sitteth on the throne, saying, Amen; Hallelujah. 5 And a voice came forth from the throne, saying,

> **Give praise to our God, all ye his servants, ye that fear him, the small and the great.**

6 And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunders, saying,

> **Hallelujah; for the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigneth. 7 Let us rejoice and be exceeding glad, and let us give the glory unto him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. 8 And it was given unto her that she should array herself in fine linen, bright and pure: for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.**

9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they that are bidden to the marriage supper of the Lamb. And

he saith unto me, These are true words of God. 10 And I fell down before his feet to worship him. And he saith unto me, See thou do it not: I am a fellow-servant with thee and with thy brethren that hold the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

As in the case of the other Episodes, this interlude is both retrospective and prospective. Two Hallelujahs look back over the judgment of the great Harlot; the other two point forward to the Throne and the Marriage Supper of the Lamb at the inauguration of the Kingdom. This worship of the great multitude and of the Elders and Living Beings is a scene of preparation for the great events to follow.

The sovereignty of the Lord God Almighty is foreannounced; the Wife and Marriage of the Lamb are foreviewed as ready; once again, and for the last time in these Visions, the Kingdom is anticipated as twice before when the Seventh Trumpet sounded and when the Dragon was cast out.

It should be noted that the "wife of the Lamb" can be no other than "the Church," though some would understand by the phrase, the new Israel of the Messianic age; but Israel from both a national and dispensational viewpoint, and by positive statements in the words of the prophets, is a wife set aside for a time, separated from Jehovah on account of her transgressions, and not a bride. The Church is a bride, who is to become a wife, who is to make herself ready and for the marriage supper, and who is collectively the saints arrayed in the fine linen of a spotless righteousness. Hosea 1–3; Is. 54: 1–8; Rev. 19: 7–9, 21: 9.

Consummation

THE SIX FINAL DOOMS. Chs. 19: 11–20: 15.

11 And I saw the heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and he that sat thereon called Faithful and True; and in righteousness he doth judge and

make war. 12 And his eyes are a flame of fire, and upon his head are many diadems; and he hath a name written which no one knoweth but he himself. 13 And he is arrayed in a garment sprinkled with blood: and his name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies which are in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and pure. 15 And out of his mouth proceedeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of God, the Almighty. 16 And he hath on his garment and on his thigh a name written, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. 17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in mid heaven, Come and be gathered together unto the great supper of God; 18 that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses and of them that sit thereon, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, and small and great. 19 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat upon the horse, and against his army. 20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought the signs in his sight, wherewith he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast and them that worshipped his image: they two were cast alive into the lake of fire that burneth with brimstone: 21 and the rest were killed with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, even the sword which came forth out of his mouth: and all the birds were filled with their flesh.

1 And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he laid hold on the dragon, the old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, 3 and cast him into the abyss, and shut it, and sealed it over him, that he should deceive the nations no more, until the thousand years should be finished: after this he must be loosed for a little time. 4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for

the word of God, and such as worshipped not the beast, neither his image, and received not the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they lived, and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5 The rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years should be finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: over these the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. 7 And when the thousand years are finished, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, 8 and shall come forth to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to the war: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. 9 And they went up over the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down out of heaven, and devoured them. 10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where are also the beast and the false prophet; and they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. 11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat upon it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne; and books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13 And the sea gave up the dead that were in it; and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. 14 And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, even the lake of fire. 15 And if any was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire.

The picture of the fall of Babylon (Ch. 18) is followed by the description of the dooms of the Beast, the false prophet, the Kings, the Dragon, Gog and the Dead.

The Vision is full of contrasts between the great Warrior and Judge who is seen coming out of the opened

heaven and the unrighteous judges and kings of the earth who are embattled against him.

He is the Faithful and True One, the Word of God, the Maker of Peace, to whom belong all the diadems of earth, the King of kings and Lord of lords.

The psalmist foresaw him as the Smiter of Nations, the coming Melchizedek priest-king of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth; and the prophet foretold him as the Mighty One who "glorious in his apparel, marching in the greatness of his strength" would come and tread the peoples in the winepress of wrath in behalf of Israel and Jerusalem. The day of vengeance foretold from age to age has come, the year of recompense for the cause of Zion; the Glory of Jehovah has appeared and all nations learn that he alone is God. Ps. 2: 1–12, 110; Is. 63: 1–6, 34–35; 66: 15–24.

The whole world, as implied in the standing of the angel in the sun, shall know of this conflict, all nations shall enter the peace to be made by this Prince of Peace, between nation and nation, between Israel and the nations, between heaven and earth, between God and man.

And when at last the gathering of the armies of heaven and earth is seen, the impotence of the warfare of kings and beasts against the Almighty who was and is and now has come, is intimated in the sublime, simple brevity of speech concerning the defeat and doom of the Beast and the false Prophet. 20: 19–21.

After the Vision of the Investiture there were others anticipating the Coming of the King in wrath to destroy the great usurper of his throne of the world; but now in a last Vision there is seen coming through the opened heaven the King of kings and Lord of lords on his way to tread the winepress of wrath on the armies of the nations. At the blowing of the Seventh Trumpet the resurrection and reward of the saints, the wrath on enemies and the establishment of the Kingdom are all proleptically ascribed with that coming; in the Vision of the Harvest he is seen on a white cloud directing the angel reapers; in the Vision of the overcomers standing triumphant by

the glory-reddened, glassy sea, it is shown how they have been removed from earth before the judgments come and the vials of wrath are poured out upon the beast, and armies and cities of the world; but now in this latest Vision not only is the One faithful and true, the Word of God, the King of kings and Lord of lords seen coming out of heaven, but also the armies which were in heaven clothed in fine linen, white and pure are seen on white horses following him.

It is a symbolic picture of the event prophesied by Paul, "When Christ who is our life shall appear then shall ye also appear with him in glory"; "he shall come to be glorified in his saints . . . in that day."

It is also written of them, "And they that are with him are called and chosen and faithful." This is said of the saints in a previous Vision just before the Lamb makes war with the Beast and the kings of the earth, and overcomes them. Rev. 17: 12–14.

In another Vision it is said, "The marriage of the Lamb is come and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen bright and pure, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints." 19: 7, 8.

This is said just before the great Hallelujah is heard concerning the Kingdom of the Lord God Almighty, which follows the war with the Beasts and the kings.

The context of these two passages is thus the same. 19: 5–6.

"And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen bright and pure." 19: 11–14.

These "armies" are not only angels but also the "saints" which, in the first quotation, are said to be "with him" and "are called and chosen and faithful." And both the "wife" and the "armies" are "clothed in fine linen bright and pure."

Also, in each instance, those "with him," and the "wife" and the "armies" are brought to view just be-

fore the war begins with the "Beast" and his allied kings.

The inference is that the three are one and the same and accompany him that is called "The Lamb" in the first two passages and "The Word of God" in the third, and in the first and third, "King of kings and Lord of lords." And that all three viewed as one are actual participants in the war, is further shown by a more faithful rendering of the first text: "His Lamb shall overcome them for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and they also shall overcome that are with him, called and chosen and faithful."

As to the passage in relation to the Thousand Years, "The Millennium" (Ch. 20: 1–15), it may be noted, first of all, that the Beast and his false Prophet are cast alive into the "lake of fire"; that is, they enter at once into the final abode of the lost, into "the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels," but into which Satan is not cast until the Thousand Years are finished. Meanwhile, he is bound and cast into a temporary compartment of the Abyss, the latter being another name for Hades. At last, these temporary abodes, Death and Hades, are themselves cast into the "lake of fire." Matt. 25: 41; Lk. 8: 31; 16: 23; 23: 43; Rom. 10: 7; Rev. 20: 1–14.

Secondly, the fulfilment of the Vision of the thrones and the judgment given comes before Harmagedon; the saints are raised before the Wrath Falls.

This is evident from the time assigned to the same judgment in the Vision of Daniel, and from the words heard in heaven at the sounding of the Seventh Trumpet. The first resurrection has taken place, but not martyrs only are on the thrones of judgment; those also who worshipped not the Beast are there, who alive with the risen dead together at the same time were translated into the presence of the Lord. Rev. 11: 13–18.

The final deception of Satan, and revolt of the nations in the four corners of the earth, attest at least the incurable depravity of man as soon as divine influences are

withdrawn and Satan is permitted again to deceive men. Rev. 20: 7–10.

Thirdly, in a preceding passage it was said, "the rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years should be finished." It is then the dead, the great and the small, who are seen standing before the great white Throne to be judged according to their works. It appears that the "first resurrection" has taken place a thousand years before, and consequently, also, the judgment of the saints, risen, living, rewarded, glorified, reigning.

[Note by Editor: It is evident that the author regarded the return of Christ as Premillennial. Yet it might be more accurate to say that he regarded it as preceding the Kingdom in which the Millennium was to issue. In his view the goal of all prophecy was not the Millennium, but the ultimate establishment upon earth of the perfected Kingdom of God. As to the Millennium, the "Notes" are seen to be very brief. His views differed from certain forms of popular premillennialism in that he did not see grounds for believing in an "any moment," "secret rapture of the Church." Rather, he saw this rapture to take place in a time of Tribulation but preceding the final judgments of God upon the "Beast," the Man of Sin.

Nor did he agree with the view that this rapture is to be placed immediately after chapter three, and that from Chapter four to nineteen the visions relate only to the Jewish people. There were many references which he interpreted as belonging specifically to Israel, and to a body of converted Jews at the time of the Great Tribulation (a "remnant according to the election of grace"), but he held that John had in view also throughout the whole course of the Apocalypse the experiences of the Christian Church.

It is also true that he identified the events predicted by Daniel and by John, and that the "last half" of Daniel's "prophetic week" of years, was the period of time described in the Revelation as "a time times and

half a time," or as "forty and two months," or "twelve hundred and sixty days."

However, those who see no identity or analogy in the events predicted by Daniel and by John, will find in this Outline an analysis of the literary material and an indication of the dramatic movement which will be of service to the reader, no matter what particular theory of interpretation may be accepted.

As the author himself stated, his analysis was "an attempt to group the contents of the Book according to what seem to be the lines of its structure."]

VII. The Seven New Things

Introductory Vision

THE NEW HEAVEN AND EARTH, AND THE NEW JERUSALEM.
Ch. 21: 1–8.

1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away; and the sea is no more. 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a great voice out of the throne saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them, and they shall be his peoples, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God: 4 and he shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more: the first things are passed away. 5 And he that sitteth on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he saith, Write: for these words are faithful and true. 6 And he said unto me, They are come to pass. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. 7 He that overcometh shall inherit these things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. 8 But for the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, their part shall be in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death.

In the first brief Vision, John beholds the New Heaven and Earth, and the Holy City coming down out of heaven from God.

He hears the great voice out of the throne announcing the passing away of the old things, of pain and sorrow and death, and the making of all things new. Great and precious promises are made to him that overcometh, and

threat of doom most direful to the unbelieving, abominable and false.

The great antitype of the encampment of the tribes of Israel in the wilderness is announced at the very first mention of the New Jerusalem: "Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them, and they shall be his peoples." In this Vision the nations are seen grouped as "peoples" of God (Israel alone being the "people of God" in the centuries of old), around the New Jerusalem.

And yet, as in solemn minor tone, the profound word of warning touching the "lake of fire" as "the second death" is also heard, but the angel enlarges rather on the fulfilments of the promises, types and predictions of a far off past, fulfilments blessed and glorious, vast and enduring. Num. 1: 47–54; 2: 1–32; Rev. 21: 1–3.

THE GLORY AND BLESSEDNESS OF THE CITY. Chs. 21: 9–22: 5.

9 And there came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls, who were laden with the seven last plagues; and he spake with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the wife of the Lamb. 10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, 11 having the glory of God: her light was like unto a stone most precious, as it were a jasper stone, clear as crystal; 12 having a wall great and high; having twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels; and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: 13 on the east were three gates; and on the north three gates; and on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. 14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. 15 And he that spake with me had for a measure a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. 16 And the city lieth foursquare, and the length thereof is as great as the breadth; and he

measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs: the length and the breadth and the height thereof are equal. 17 And he measured the wall thereof, a hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel. 18 And the building of the wall thereof was jasper; and the city was pure gold, like unto pure glass. 19 The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, chalcedony; the fourth, emerald; 20 the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chrysoprase; the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth, amethyst. 21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the several gates was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass. 22 And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God the Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple thereof. 23 And the city hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine upon it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the lamp thereof is the Lamb. 24 And the nation shall walk amidst the light thereof: and the kings of the earth bring their glory into it. 25 And the gates thereof shall in no wise be shut by day (for there shall be no night there): 26 and they shall bring the glory and the honour of the nations into it: 27 and there shall in no wise enter into it anything unclean, or he that maketh an abomination and a lie: but only they that are written in the Lamb's book of life.

1 And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, 2 in the midst of the street thereof. And on this side of the river and on that was the tree of life, bearing twelve manner of fruits, yielding its fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. 3 And there shall be no curse any more: and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be therein: and his servants shall serve him; 4 and they shall see his face; and his name shall be on their foreheads. 5 And there shall be night no more; and they need no light of lamp, neither light of sun; for the Lord God shall

give them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

Then is shown the marvelous structure of the City to the Seer from a great and high mountain. After this, in the final Vision, the blessed and eternal contents of the City are seen. All the great typical forms of future blessed realities for man and nature set forth in the inspired Word of God, and all the shadowy tentative experiences of human history, Hebrew and Gentile, are now shown at last in complete fulfilment and perfect realization.

What sin once brought, grace has forever removed, and in its stead has brought the more exceeding blessing.

The Seven New Things of these visions are the New Heaven, Earth, Peoples, City, Temple, Luminary and Paradise.

The centre and heart of all is the City of God, filled with his glory and indwelt by all glorified beings. The nations shall walk in its light and their kings shall bring their glory and honour into it.

Paradise is restored, but in a City of unimaginable glories; the tree of life is seen again, but more than one and on either side of the crystal river of water of life proceeding now out of the throne of God and of the Lamb; the fellowship with God is unbroken and his servants see his face, and there shall be no more curse; no sanctuary is seen in the City, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are now the Holy of Holies; no night is there, no need of light of lamp nor light of sun, for the glory of God shall lighten all, and the lamp of the City is the Lamb; the New Jerusalem is now the Mother of all the living, holy and heavenly, the Metropolis of the new earth; in brief, in this city, the joy of the whole universe, is seen the once far off Goal and End of divine purpose and human history, the long-hoped-for Consummation of the Redemption of Man and of Nature, the Kingdom of God in its final, perfected, eternal form, all enemies subdued and "God all in all."

THE EPILOGUE. Ch. 22: 6–21.

6 And he said unto me, These words are faithful and true: and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly come to pass. 7 And behold, I come quickly. Blessed is he that keepeth the words of the prophecy of this book. 8 And I John am he that heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel that showed me these things. 9 And he saith unto me, See thou do it not: I am a fellow-servant with thee and with thy brethren the prophets, and with them that keep the words of this book: worship God. 10 And he saith unto me, Seal not up the words of the prophecy of this book; for the time is at hand. 11 He that is unrighteous, let him do unrighteousness still: and he that is filthy, let him be made filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him do righteousness still: and he that is holy, let him be made holy still. 12 Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to render to each man according as his work is. 13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. 14 Blessed are they that wash their robes, that they may have the right to come to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gates into the city. 15 Without are the dogs, and the sorcerers, and the fornicators, and the murderers, and the idolaters, and every one that loveth and maketh a lie. 16 I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things for the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright, the morning star. 17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And he that heareth, let him say, Come. And he that is athirst, let him come: he that will, let him take the water of life freely. 18 I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto them, God shall add unto him the plagues which are written in this book: 19 and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city, which are written in this book. 20 He who testifieth these things saith,

Yea: I come quickly. Amen: come, Lord Jesus. 21 The grace of the Lord Jesus be with the saints. Amen.

No wonder that when John saw these things he was ready to fall down and worship before the feet of the angel as if he were the Lord himself.

Nor do we wonder that the Lord Jesus, too, is most desirous to have the saints share with him all the glories revealed in these Visions. Thrice is heard the word "Behold I come quickly," and to it the response of all the saints should ever be, "Amen; come, Lord Jesus."

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